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Ecclesiology and Enlightenment Social Theory: The Reconstruction of Ecclesiology in the Tradition of Anglican Religious Liberalism From John Hales to Thomas Arnold

Daniel Mark Cere

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ABSTRACT

Ecclesiology and Enlightenment Social Theory:
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This study argues that a constructive approach to modern ecclesiological debates depends upon an assessment of the relationship between the discipline of ecclesiology and Enlightenment social and political theory. Chapter one provides an overview of the methodological concerns that must be addressed in providing an adequate treatment of the relationship between these two traditions of discourse. It argues that there are three major tasks involved in this project: a) a close reading of the historical patterns of interaction between ecclesiology and Enlightenment social and political theories; b) the identification of the new problematics and concerns that Enlightenment social theory generated for modern ecclesiology; and, c) the question of the relationship between reconstructed ecclesiologies and pre-Enlightenment traditions of ecclesiology.

The body of the thesis explores a major line of English ecclesiological debate extending from the Great Tew school of the seventeenth century to the Liberal

Anglicans of the early nineteenth century. This tradition of English religious liberalism is marked by its close dialogue with developments in Enlightenment social and political theories. Part one looks at the full-scale application of "natural jurisprudence" theories (e.g. Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, and Pufendorf) to the discipline of ecclesiology by the "moderates" and "Latitudinarians" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Chillingworth, Hales, Stillingfleet, Warburton, and Paley).

Part two explores the reasons for collapse of Latitudinarian religious liberalism in the early nineteenth century. The reconstruction of a liberal ecclesiological tradition was the achievement of the Liberal Anglicans such as S.T. Coleridge, Thomas Erskine, Thomas Arnold, and Julius Hare, who responded to the shift in English religious culture that resulted from the impact of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century pietist revivalism. The reconstruction of liberal ecclesiology achieved by S.T.Coleridge and Thomas Arnold was the result of a dialogue with an alternate tradition of Enlightenment political thought - the "civic humanist" or "republican" tradition.

The final chapter argues that while there are major shifts and developments in the evolving tradition of religious liberal ecclesiology, nevertheless, a common

core of key conclusions can be identified. It concludes with a brief examination of the way in which the framework of modern ecclesiological debate was widened by the questions and concerns raised by J.H.Newman. A systematic treatment of the relationship of ecclesiology and Enlightenment social theory must be sensitive to a framework of debate that transcends the boundaries of specific traditions such as religious liberalism.

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I am also thankful for the research scholarships that were provided over the past few years by Concordia Graduate Fellowships, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the FCAC bourses d'excellence.

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CHAPTER I

ECCLESIOLOGY AND ENLIGHTENMENT SOCIAL THEORY

Introduction

In the last 20 years theology has shifted its attention away from ecclesiology. In Roman Catholic circles there was an "ecclesiological fatigue" in the wake of the frenzy of controversies leading up to and following the Vatican II Council.[1] In part this was due to frustration with the polemical and apparently irresolvable character of ecclesiological debates during the 1950's and 60's. This disenchantment with the discipline was not significantly affected by John Paul II's strong exhortation for renewed attention to the theology of the church in his inaugural speech.[2]

In the Reformation and Counter-reformation era ecclesiological controversies were a marked feature of inter-denominational debate. Today serious ecclesiological conflict has penetrated into the

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[1]. Franz Josef van Beeck, "From Ecclesiological Fatigue to Christian Identity", Christ Proclaimed, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

[2]. John Paul II, "The First Speech", Oct.17, 1979, Origins vol.8, pp.291-4; "This general thrust of faithfulness to the Second Vatican Council embraces many aspects...but one aspect above all others -- the one that calls for the closest attention -- is that of ecclesiology...We must make a renewed and strengthened meditation on the nature and the function of the church."

internal life of the mainstream denominations. The question, "What is the Church?", evokes a variety of possible answers. Each tradition can point to its own radical, liberal, and conservative approaches to the question of the church. Even within these broad approaches there are a variety of conflicting options. Radical ecclesiologies, for example, fragment into a number of distinct trajectories such as liberation theology, political theology, and feminist theology.[3] The multiplication of ecclesiological manifestos (liberal, conservative, or radical) only serves to intensify debate and polarization.

Is there a way out of these fissured debates? Frequently one hears the need for a more "comprehensive" response, a consensus position, which is constructed out of a creative amalgam of different ecclesiological insights.[4] However such comprehensive responses are

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[3]. The significant distinctions between liberation and political theologies are highlighted in Francis Fiorenza's essay "Political Theology and Liberation Theology: an Inquiry into their Fundamental Meaning", in Liberation, Revolution and Freedom, ed. by Thomas McFadden, (New York, 1975). Variations within feminist theology are discussed by R.Reuther in Sexism and God Talk (Boston: Beacon Press,1983), ch.9.

[4]. Avery Dulles' Models of the Church (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1974) provides one of the most sensitive attempts at this kind of approach. An earlier overview is provided by Richard P.McBrien in Church: The Continuing Quest, (New York: Newman Press, 1970) and more recently, by the same author, part four of

seldom satisfactory. At best they represent tentative summaries of the state of the debate, summaries which need continual updating. At the same time they have the effect of disguising the fragmented character of modern ecclesiological debate under platitudes about the healthy pluralism of modern theology and the emerging constructive consensus of critical scholarship. They do not, and probably cannot, provide a way of critically evaluating and resolving fundamental disagreements.

More recently a dominant theological strategy for resolving the ecclesiological debates has been to extend those debates into other fields such as Christology, the theology of revelation, and the theology of God. In Roman Catholic circles this strategy is followed both by conservative theologians such as Walter Kasper and liberal theologians such as Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx.[5] However, this development has only

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Catholicism, "The Church", pp.565-901 (Oak Grove, Minn.: Winston Press, 1981).

[5]. For example, during the 1960's the major works of Hans Küng such as The Church (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), Structures of the Church, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968, @1964), and The Council and Reunion (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), targeted ecclesiological questions. More recent contributions have focussed on christology, eschatology, theology of God, and interreligious dialogue: On Being a Christian (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), Eternal Life, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1984), Does God Exist?, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), Christianity and World Religions (Garden City,

served to highlight the profound ramifications of the initial divergence over the theology of the church. I believe that it also tends to deflect theological debate away from the critical issues over which disagreement has occurred - issues such as the historical nature of the church, the nature of freedom, the problem of enlightened public authority, the status of public doctrines, and the significance of the political and institutional dimensions of ecclesial life. These ecclesiological problems need to be subjected to a more rigorous conceptual and historical analysis.

A common feature of the various ecclesiological manifestos and the various consensus approaches proposing to make constructive contributions is that their methodologies are basically a-historical. As a first step it seems clear that a more constructive approach to present day disagreements will have to be characterized by far more substantial research into the history of ecclesiological debate in the modern period.

There are at least three critical tasks that need attention. First, there is a need for a historical analysis of patterns of interaction between Enlightenment social theories and traditions of ecclesiology. Modern social and political theories have

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New York: Doubleday, 1986)

been critical but often unacknowledged partners in history of modern ecclesiological debates. In some cases there is strong evidence of the actual employment of a specific tradition of social theory by a major tradition of ecclesiology. In other cases there are striking parallels between debates in Enlightenment social theory and ecclesiology that merit serious attention. Modern ecclesiological debates cannot be properly understood in isolation from debates in Enlightenment social philosophies.

Secondly, the historical analysis of these patterns of interaction should lead to a sharper definition of the critical issues underlying ecclesiological conflict in the modern era. A new set of problematics and questions generated by Enlightenment social philosophies have found their way into modern ecclesiological debate: e.g., the historicity of church institutions, doctrines, and traditions; the pluralism of ecclesial life and the question of tolerance; the range of human freedom and self-determination in relation to ecclesial authority; and the status of the juridical institutional dimensions of ecclesial life given the recognition of the critical role of more sociological factors in the life of religious community. These questions are products of Enlightenment debates and require responses that go

beyond the confines of pre-Enlightenment ecclesiological paradigms. There is a need to clarify the ways in which the horizons of ecclesiological debate were redefined and to evaluate the success of the various modern ecclesiological reconstructions in engaging and responding to the new set of questions and concerns posed by Enlightenment debates.

Third, there must be an assessment of whether any given reconstruction of modern ecclesiology remains faithful to and develops a tradition of ecclesiological discourse which predates the Enlightenment. Ecclesiology, similar to moral discourse, is a tradition-constituted form of enquiry.[6] Ecclesiology is an intellectual discourse which attempts to clarify the constitutive elements of a religious tradition as they apply to the social and institutional character of the life of that tradition. An ecclesiological reconstruction must attempt to speak to more than just the concerns of the Enlightenment. It must demonstrate substantial continuity with constitutive elements of the Christian tradition.

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[6]. See Alasdair MacIntyre's discussion of tradition-constituted forms of enquiry in chapter 18 of Whose Justice? Which Rationality? (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

1. Patterns of Interaction Between Social Theory and Ecclesiology in the Enlightenment Debate

One might suggest as a general methodological principle that developments and debates in ecclesiology should be read in the context of a close reading of developments and debates in social and political theory. The relationship between ecclesiology and social theory is probably analogous to Bernard Lonergan's description of the relationship between philosophical and theological approaches to the question of God.[7] Although there is a "distinction" between these theological and non-theological disciplines, nevertheless, the traditional classicist "separation" of these disciplines - philosophy and theology of God or social theory and ecclesiology - cannot be maintained. Both ecclesiology and social theory have a "common origin" insofar as they attempt to provide an exploration of the communal dimension of human experience. They also have a "common goal" insofar as both disciplines purport to offer insight into the social context for human development.[8]

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[7]. Bernard Lonergan, Philosophy of God, and Theology, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973).

[8]. Bernard Lonergan, Philosophy of God, and Theology, see his reflections on pages 58-9.

A recognition of the important historical links between traditions of ecclesiological and political discourse in the West is not a new insight. Substantial work has been done on the impact of Neo-Platonic and feudal paradigms on medieval ecclesiology, the impact Renaissance Republicanism on Calvinist ecclesiology, and the influence of Nominalist and Marsilian political thought on Lutheran and early Anglican ecclesiological perspectives.[9] These studies indicate that ecclesio-

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[9]. Insightful reflections on the connections between political theory and ecclesiology are offered by Sheldon Wolin in his discussion of patristic, medieval, and reformation Christianity in Politics and Vision (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1960). There are numerous examples of studies on the interaction between ecclesiology and political thought in the medieval and late medieval periods: A.J.Black, Monarchy and Community: Political Ideas in the Later Conciliar Controversy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); S.Chodorow, Christian Political Theory and Church Politics in the Mid-Twelfth Century, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); G.Tellenbach, Church, State and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940); B.Tierney, Foundations of Conciliar Theory, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955); W.Ullmann, The Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists (London: Methuen & Co., 1955). My master's thesis explored research on the impact of Renaissance republicanism and Roman Law theory on Calvin's ecclesiology, Calvin's Theory of Church Polity, McGill University, M.A. Thesis, 1977). Geoffrey Elton's studies on the sixteenth century reformation of the English church have underlined the critical role of Thomas Cromwell and the influence of the political thought of Marsilius of Padua in shaping Cromwell's strategies for ecclesiastical reform (see Rosemary O'Day's discussion of Elton's interpretation in The Debate on the English Reformation, (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), pp.119f.

logical reflection has had an ongoing intellectual dialogue with developments in social and political theory. However, the relationship of modern ecclesiology to the important shifts in social theory that occurred during the English Enlightenment has not been the subject of such intensive research. This gap is particularly disconcerting given the dramatic nature of the shifts in social and political thought during this period.

The analysis of the patterns of interaction between these two major disciplines of enquiry should not be conducted on a level of vague generality. It demands a close reading of the actual history and development of the various Enlightenment traditions of social and political theory. Alasdair MacIntyre points out that traditions of enquiry and the interaction and conflict between traditions of enquiry cannot be understood apart from a narrative of the specific historical debates and arguments that were constitutive for the development of these traditions.[10] One of the tasks of this thesis is the exploration of the broader question of ecclesiology and Enlightenment social theory through an analysis of one specific tradition of enquiry - the English

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[10]. Alasdair MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality? see his discussions in chs. 1 & 18.

religious liberal tradition of ecclesiological discourse and its dialogue with seventeenth and eighteenth-century intellectual traditions in social and political thought.

A. The "Traditions" of Enlightenment Social Theory:

Enlightenment social and political theory is not a monolithic ideology. There is a fairly widespread view that the Enlightenment debate generated at least three broad mainstream "traditions" of social theory that have a marked continuity with later developments in the nineteenth and twentieth century. It produced liberal theorists such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Bentham, and J.S.Mill. It produced conservatives such as Edmund Burke, Josiah Tucker, DeMaistre, and Adam Muller, and radicals such as Paine, Rousseau, Godwin, and Marx.[11]

Within a broad mainstream tradition there is a diversity of quite distinct trajectories. The liberalism of a Harrington is far removed from the liberalism of a John Locke. They offered competing, even conflicting, paradigms within the emerging liberal tradition. It is important to clarify the important

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[11]. The Modern Ideologies series published by J.M.Dent & Sons provides monographs on these traditions: D.J.Manning, Liberalism, (London: J.M.Dent & Sons, 1976), Noel O'Sullivan, Conservatism, (London: J.M.Dent & Sons, 1976), and R.N.Berki, Socialism (London: J.M.Dent & Sons, 1975).

trajectories of the various traditions of Enlightenment social theory in order to specify more accurately the particular paradigm of social theory an ecclesiology may be taking its cues from or reacting to.

The identification of the broad "traditions" as well as the more historically situated "trajectories" of Enlightenment thought is of particular importance in the analysis of the relationship of ecclesiological developments to Enlightenment social and political theory since there is a danger of identifying the Enlightenment with one specific tradition such as liberalism or one specific tradition-trajectory such as the political thought of Locke. Often Enlightenment political thought is identified with an ideological tradition espousing a specific set of norms such as tolerance, pluralism, human rights, etc. However, the identification of the Enlightenment by normative content misses the mark. When we attempt to identify the Enlightenment with commitment to a set of fundamental values or norms we inevitably pigeon-hole Enlightenment social theory into one of is major traditions such as liberalism, radicalism, or conservatism. If the Enlightenment debate in social and political thought constitutes a major intellectual development that modern ecclesiology must engage and respond to then it is

critical that the full boundaries of that debate might be appreciated.

Each of the mainstream traditions that contribute to Enlightenment debates in social and political thought are identifiable by their allegiance to a set of characteristic principles or norms which are embodied in the diverse institutional practices as well as the various theoretical systems generated by each tradition. The first major development in the early evolution of the Enlightenment debates in social and political theory is the emergence of the liberal tradition.[12] Liberalism is critical of the public imposition of any substantive moral or religious doctrines upon the individual or society as a whole.[13] Such absolute norms must either be relegated to the realm of private conscience or be content to operate as possible vehicles of public opinion and consensus in the free market of values and ideas. In the political community liberal institutions

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[12]. Harold Laski, The Rise of European Liberalism, (London: Unwin, 1962); G.De Ruggiero, The History of European Liberalism, (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).

[13]. By "substantive" moral or religious values I mean values which define a vision of what constitutes the "good" for an individual and/or a community. This may entail concepts of virtue or excellence in human character, definitions of preferred social roles and lifestyles in society (e.g. monogamous marriage), or even an ordering of political life to serve a particular religious vision of the good life.

should promote procedural values, such as pluralism, tolerance, consensus, and human rights, values which maximize the freedom of the enlightened citizen. Furthermore, the public historical institutions which promote the liberal ethos should not be justified on the basis of any appeal to authoritative grounds which transcend human prudence. Institutions, like moral and political norms, are open to ongoing revision based on the prudential exercise of human reason.

Conservative thought is frequently, though erroneously, perceived to be an uncritical reaction against modernity and Enlightenment. Since many contributions in nineteenth-century ecclesiology reflect the concerns of conservative social theories they are easily dismissed as reactionary, obstructionistic, and out of touch with critical intellectual developments in modernity.

However, some strands of conservative thought were neither a reaction to, nor a rebellion against, Enlightenment thought. Rather they can be seen as a particular response to and development within the Enlightenment.[14] The conservative contribution could

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[14]. This is the conclusion of a number of contemporary historians of modern social theory such as Robert Nisbet, Jerry Szacki, and Zeitlin: Robert Nisbet, "Conservatism" in A History of Sociological Analysis, ed. by T.Bottomore and R.Nisbet, (London:

be summarized in these terms:[15]

1. It stressed the socially situated character of human individuality and personality. De Bonald states that "The schools of modern philosophy have produced the philosophy of I...I want to produce the philosophy of social man, the philosophy of "We"".[16]

2. It provides a more appreciative account of the relationship between religion and society than is evident in liberalism or radicalism. Conservative social theorists point to the critical role of religious values and practice in the formation and development of culture.

3. Conservatives highlight the critical role of institutions. They stress on the value laden

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Heinemann, 1978), pp.80-117 and The Sociological Tradition, (New York: Basic Books, 1966); Jerry Szacki, A History of Sociological Thought, (Westport, Conn,: Greenwood Press, 1979); Irving M.Zeitlin, Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), esp. chs. 4 & 5. Also of interest are Hermann Strasser's, The Normative Structure of Sociology: Conservative and Emancipatory Themes in Social Thought (London Routledge and Kegan Paul,1976); Karl Mannheim's insightful discussion of the conservative stream in German social and political theory, "Conservative Thought", Essays in Sociology and Social Psychology (London: Routledge and Paul, 1953), pp.74-164; and George Sabine's review of conservative developments in political theory, A History of Political Theory, (Hinsdale Ill.: Dryden Press, 1973, chs.28-30.

15. Zeitlin provides a more extensive list conservative insights in Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, pp.54-55. Other contributions to the study of conservative paradigms in social and political theory are provided by O'Sullivan, Conservatism; Roger Scruton, The Meaning of Conservatism (Harmondworth: Penguin, 1980); and Russel Kirk, The Conservative Mind, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953).

16. quoted from A History of Sociological Thought by Jerry Szacki. See his discussion of the conservative contribution in modern social theory, pp.92-98.

character of social institutions. Liberalism sees institutions as purely functional. Conservatives argue that institutions (with their patterns of hierarchy and status) embody substantive moral and religious values.

4. Conservative theorists such as Burke, Herder, and Newman have provided new insights into the historical character of the human experience and the role of tradition.

5. The Romantic-Conservative response of the early nineteenth century offered new approaches to language, symbols, and the interpretation of texts and art.

6. Conservative sociologists such as Leplay insisted on the essential role of mediating structures such as family, kinship structures, occupational groups, etc., as basic units of society.

7. Conservative social theories have provided critical insights into problematic features of liberal and radical social programs.They stress the fragile character of moral and religious traditions in modernity and are critical of the thoughtless destruction of such traditions by liberal reformism or radical revolution. In conservative diagnosis of modernity liberal societies are seen to be productive of "anomie", the decay of any form of substantive moral order, while radical societies are accused of having a logic which generates totalitarian strategies.

Conservatism represented the development of a substantial theoretical paradigm within the Enlightenment. Its response to these debates should not be overlooked. The new theoretical apparatus it forged was critical for certain developments in ecclesiology in the nineteenth century. In fact, significant steps in the construction of a critical conservative response were made through the contributions of nineteenth century ecclesiologists

and theologians. Theorists such as DeMaistre, DeBonald, Moehler, and Newman offered innovative insights into the role of institutions, authority, and tradition.

Radicalism sees the institutions of society as embodying structures of oppression. These structures victimize and dehumanize whole classes of people. Oppression leads to alienation, the internalization of oppression. The victims become alienated from their own humanity, from their power of self-determination, and they are alienated from others who operate as victims or oppressors rather than authentic human beings. Critique and revolutionary destruction of these institutionalized patterns of oppression leads to liberation. The victims of social injustice are uniquely placed to see the contradictions and evils embodied in established institutions and ideologies. Their experience and consciousness of injustice is the catalyst for critical analysis and transformation of society. The specific institutional character of the liberated society is usually left undefined in radical theories. However, its normative characteristics are spelled out. It will be marked by radical egalitarianism, communal solidarity, and the creative actualization of individual

humanity and potentiality.[17]

These core ideological perspectives define some of the constitutive elements of these major traditions within Enlightenment thought. Important traditions of modern ecclesiological discourse often seem to fall within the conceptual boundaries of one of these traditions of social and political discourse. Latitudinarian ecclesiology and nineteenth-century Liberal Anglican ecclesiology reflect the questions, concerns, and interests of the liberal tradition of political discourse. Nineteenth-century confessionalist ecclesiologies proposed by such thinkers as J.H.Newman, W.G.Ward, V.De Bonald, Joseph De Maistre, J.Cortes, or J.Balmes reflect the concerns of conservative social theory. Contemporary liberation theology, feminist theology, and political theology is shaped by the agenda of the radical tradition.

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17. See R.N.Berki's discussion of the "libertarian" motif in radical thought (Socialism, pp.28-29). Berki describes four distinct "tendencies" (moralism, rationalism, egalitarianism, and libertarianism) that eventually crystallized into distinct intellectual and political movements within radical thought (ch. 2, chs. 6-9).

B. Trajectories of Social Theory: The Liberal Debate in Enlightenment Social Theory and Ecclesiology.

The identification of the various traditions of social and political theory generated within the Enlightenment is a critical step in the assessment of the interaction between political and ecclesiological debates. However, an interpretation of a tradition and its impact on ecclesiology cannot be constructed in the very general a priori manner suggested by this kind of brief overview. This assessment should evolve out of patient research into the specific schools of thought and argument within these broader traditions in order to unearth the historical connections of modern ecclesiological debates to Enlightenment social and political theories. The broad caricature of the diversity of Enlightenment traditions presented in the above section would be frowned upon by many revisionist scholars in seventeenth and eighteenth-century English political thought. The reason for this is that such general classifications as "the liberal tradition" or "the conservative tradition" are usually superficial and anachronistic. They seldom shed light on the unique texture of debate in a particular historical period. In recent years there has been a new emphasis on the need to return to the sources and engage in a more detailed

analysis of political debates in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England.[18] The Enlightenment generated very diverse schools of thought on the nature of the polity, society, and economy. Their contributions are often deeply connected to debates, schools of thought, and issues that are situated in a particular historical eras. For example, seventeenth and eighteenth-century English debates over the standing militia are foreign to twentieth-century political thinking and the significance of these debates are lost to us. In the interpretation of Enlightenment political thought one must be prepared to research and analyze debates that may have little or no relevance to contemporary political thinking.[19]

While recognizing the value of this critique I

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[18]. This revisionist approach to the history of English political thought is found in the work of scholars such as Quentin Skinner, J.G.A.Pocock, John Dunn, James Tully, James Moore, Michael Silverthorne, and Donald Winch. A critical overview of some of the basic methodological assumptions underlying this school of thought is offered in a collection of essays edited by James Tully, Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[19]. James Tully states that political or ecclesiological texts should be interpreted as linguistic acts which have an "illocutionary force" as well as "propositional" meaning. These texts are making a "point" that is specific to a given historical and ideological situation. "The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics", in Meaning and Context, ed. J.Tully, pp.8-9.

would argue it would be a presumptuous methodological move to dismiss the thesis that specific historically situated schools of thought can be interpreted as contributions within a wider identifiable "tradition" of discourse.[20] The attempt to identify such broad traditions of social and political thought should not undermine the need for detailed analysis of the way in which specific theoretical contributions in a tradition of discourse may be embedded in particular network of institutions, practices, and debates peculiar to a very specific historical situation.

The pattern of interaction between liberal social theories and ecclesiologies in the English-speaking religious world provides an interesting examples of the problematic that I am exploring. Liberalism had a profound impact on English culture. The pervasive critiques of doctrinalism, authoritarianism, and supernaturalism, as well as the growing demands for democratization, representation, and decentralization in church structures were reflective of the decisive influence of liberal paradigms in eighteenth and nineteenth-century English ecclesiological discourse.

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[20]. While Quentin Skinner raises important qualifications, nevertheless, he does not dismiss such a position, "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action", in Meaning and Context, ed.J.Tully, pp.106-7.

It is arguable that religious liberalism can be seen as the catalyst for the first major dialogue which attempted to bring the concerns of Enlightenment social theory to bear upon modern ecclesiological reflection. The thesis will attempt to provide an analysis of the history of this dialogue and its expression through specific developments in English ecclesiology. A brief overview may help clarify the nature of this research task.

Revisionist research in seventeenth and eighteenth-century English political thought has pointed to the diversity and complexity of the liberal tradition. It has shown that traditional emphasis on the dominance of Locke's political philosophy in modern liberalism is misleading. In the first place, Locke's liberalism has been redefined as a trajectory within the broader tradition of "natural jurisprudence" that stemmed from Grotius and was developed by theorists such as Locke, Pufendorf, Leibniz, and Wolff.[21] Secondly, within the

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[21]. Knud Haakonssen, "Hugo Grotius and the History of Political Thought", Political Theory 13 (1985) pp.236-265; Richard Tuck, Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); J.G.A.Pocock, "Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: a Study of the Relations Between the Civic Humanists and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Thought", in Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge: Cambridge

broad framework of liberal thought there was an alternate theoretical paradigm to that of the natural jurisprudence tradition.[22] This "civic humanist" or "republican" tradition becomes a significant force in early nineteenth-century liberal ecclesiology.[23]

University Press, 1983). Additional bibliographical references are found in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

[22]. See the bibliographical references in chapter nine.

[23]. This classification of civic humanism and natural jurisprudence under a broad tradition of English "liberalism" would be unsatisfactory to scholars such as J.G.A.Pocock who underline the marked differences between the civic humanist paradigm and those developed in the natural jurisprudence tradition (for a review of Pocock's contribution see "Political Languages in Time - The Work of J.G.A.Pocock" by Ian Hampsher-Monk, British Journal of Political Science, 14(1984). Also, "liberalism" as an identifiable political ideology is a development within early nineteenth century political thought. Similarly, the designation "religious liberalism" is an early 19th century phenomenon. Some scholars such as Jeffrey C.Isaac take issue with this approach and argue that both of these competing trajectories (civic humanism and natural jurisprudence) feed into a more monolithic tradition of English liberalism ("Republicanism vs. Liberalism? A Reconsideration", History of Political Thought, 9 (1988) pp.349-377. My intention in using the terms "liberalism" and "religious liberalism" is more modest. I hope to identify trajectories of ecclesiological debate which break with doctrinal High Chu.ch and Presbyterian ecclesiologies. Despite the fact that quite different and competing paradigms are operating within this reaction to doctrinal ecclesiologies, nevertheless, they tend to drive towards a common set of broad ecclesiological conclusions that constitutes an alternate line of discourse. Since these conclusions are congruent with those which we would recognize as a "religious liberal" position I adopt this fairly accessible, though anachronistic, designation of diverse seventeenth and eighteenth century contributions which

An examination of ecclesiological debates in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth-century reveals the decisive impact of the natural jurisprudence paradigm. Liberal jurisprudence stemming from Grotius put forward a number of key positions.[24] First, it rejected the classical Aristotelian concept of political community as a polis geared to the pursuit of virtue and the good. It portrayed political society as a more mundane institutional arrangement which allocates and administers offices, properties, and goods. Public institutions were downgeared to serve more functional interests such as public order and protection of property and liberal procedural values such as tolerance and pluralism.

Secondly, it redefined the concept of ius or "right". Right was no longer the character of an action when attuned to divine or natural law. The natural jurisprudence tradition redefined right as a quality which one possesses, something which individuals have by nature. Natural rights focussed on one's life, liberty, body, and dominium (property and contractual relationships). According to this theory of possessive

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contemporaries would label as "Moderate", "Whig", "Erastian", "Latitudinarian", and "Armininian".

24. Knud Haakonssen, "Hugo Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.239-265.

individualism, rights were the power to keep others off that which is one's own (one's suum). This theory of natural rights significantly altered the content of public morality. Within liberal jurisprudence the essential requirements of moral action in the public realm are reduced to a bare minimum: protection of one's own rights and non-infringement on the rights of others. The cultivation of virtue and pursuit of fundamental moral or religious goods are bracketed out from the realm of legal and political rights and duties.[25]

Thirdly, jurisprudence political thought promoted a secularization of natural rights and natural law theory. Natural laws and natural rights are determined by an analysis of man-as-he-is and society-as-it-is rather than a vision of man-as-he-should-be or society-as-it-should-be.[26] The traditional connections of natural law theory to theology and teleology were severed.

Fourth, the jurisprudence tradition cast a jaundiced eye at all forms of moral or religious "enthusiasm", that is, any attempt to attune the political community to a moral or religious vision of the "good". If a tolerant public order was to be

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25. Knud Haakonssen, "Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.253-261.

26. See Alasdair MacIntyre's reflections in After Virtue (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, 1984), ch.5.

achieved the disruptive influence of moral and religious enthusiasm had to be controlled. In effect this meant that the power and influence of the Christian churches on the public realm had to be strictly curtailed or regulated. One of the striking characteristic traits of liberals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the strong Erastian bent of their church-state theories.[27] A tolerant comprehension of religious diversity must be politically dictated and enforced by the secular lay power of the state.

Significant statements concerning the nature of the church and its relationship to the state were generated within the confines of the natural jurisprudence tradition. Jurisprudence theorists such as Grotius and Pufendorf dedicated significant effort to the reconstruction of the church concept along lines compatible with the jurisprudence tradition. Even Thomas Hobbes dedicates almost one-half of the his major treatise, Leviathan, to theological and ecclesiological questions. The fact that the sincerity of Hobbes' personal interest in and commitment to any form of Christian faith has been subject to severe questioning by both his contemporaries and later scholars only

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27. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, (Gloucester Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), vol.4, esp. pp.265-329.

serves to underline how crucial it was for jurisprudence theorists to engage the ecclesiological problem even if they had little sympathy for the church per se.[28]

However, the jurisprudence tradition did not have to rely solely upon political theorists for an ecclesiological articulation of its insights. In England this tradition was carried into ecclesiology by a school of liberal theology which attempted to construct a theory of the church built firmly upon the jurisprudence paradigm. Early seventeenth-century English religious liberals, such as Chillingworth and Hales, and seventeenth and eighteenth-century Latitudinarians such as Stillingfleet and Warburton systematically employed the jurisprudence paradigm in their reconstruction of ecclesiology.[29]

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28. Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1960), pp. 273-74 and 335-37 and C.B.MacPherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.224-29, argue that the theological and ecclesiological components of the Leviathan are purely expedientiel. F.C.Hood, The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) and Eldon Eisenach, The Two Worlds of Liberalism: Religion and Politics in Hobbes, Locke, and Mill (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp.13-71 challenge this interpretation arguing that there is a close systematic relationship between his politics and his Christian world view.

29. For a discussion of the 17th century tradition of religious liberalism in England see John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols., (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972, reprint) W.K.Jordan, The Development of

Jurisprudence theorists attempted to de-construct the traditional teleological concept of state and replace it with an institutional order which would not entail any socially imposed concept of the good. Given the pivotal role of the church in the commonwealth this project could not be achieved without a significant reconstruction of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Traditional ecclesiastical patterns were disruptive of liberal order since they tended to undermine the norms of tolerance, pluralism, and "comprehensiveness". A number of controversial proposals were advanced to reconstruct church state relations in such a way as to avoid this problem. Seventeenth-century Latitudinarians tended to argue for a strict Erastianism which would place the institutional structures of the church under the sovereign authority of the state. Locke called for a strict separation of the ecclesiastical associations and the state. Locke suggested that this would be the most effective way of marginalizing the impact of religion on public life. Warburton proposed a federalist "alliance" - a via media between the two previous positions. All of these proposals represented alternate ecclesiological strategies operative within

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Religious Toleration in England, (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965) 4 vols.

the jurisprudence school of thought.

Furthermore, this dialogue with liberal jurisprudence theory provoked a line of theological debate that underlies a great deal of the ecclesiological controversies in the Enlightenment era. It ineluctably forced a major challenge to the notion of sacred doctrine. Latitudinarians argued that the traditional concepts of public authoritative doctrine were too intellectually problematic and far too politically disruptive. They argued that there were no substantial objective grounds for the establishment of binding authoritative public doctrines. Few doc rinal beliefs could be validated by an appeal to scripture since scripture was largely non-doctrinal. Appeals to tradition were unsuccessful since tradition was a-rational historical experience. Finally, the pietist claims that doctrines could be validated on the basis of an appeal to supernatural religious experience were roundly condemned as irrational "enthusiasm".

In systematically critiquing these claims Latitudinarians deliberately pushed for the de-doctrinalization of ecclesiology. They argued that church institutions were not fixed and sacred but mutable and historical. Ecclesiastical institutions are part of the institutional arrangements of the

commonwealth and are to be ordered and governed by the norms of human prudence rather than authoritative doctrine. It placed the visible church in the realm of the purely historical and secular, the realm of human law (ius humanum) rather than divine law (ius divinum).[30] Thus, there would be an end to the formal separation, or even a real distinction, between ecclesiology and political theory (jurisprudence).

Recent scholarship has underlined the importance of the natural jurisprudence paradigm for seventeenth and eighteenth-century debates in social and political theory. Its contribution to ecclesiological debates needs further exploration. However, students of intellectual history have also demonstrated that this tradition was not the only major paradigm available to ecclesiology in the liberal tradition. Z.S.Fink, J.G.A.Pocock, Caroline Robbins, and Bernard Bailyn have

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30. John Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men 1660-1689: Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and "Hobbism"", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 36(1985), pp.407-427. Examples of Latitudinarian ecclesiological treatises are Irenicum (1662), by Edward Stillingfleet, A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie (1670) by Samuel Parker, and The Alliance Between Church and State (1736) by William Warburton. Warburton's study came to be seen as the authoritative ecclesiological treatise for the Church of England in the eighteenth century. At the beginning of his treatise Warburton explicitly alerts the reader to the fact that he is basing his ecclesiological reflection upon the jurisprudence paradigm rather than dogmatic theology.

unearthed a number of distinct schools of thought operative within the broad stream of English-speaking liberalism.[31] The primary achievement of this revisionist work has been the illumination of the "civic humanist" or "republican" paradigm in seventeenth and eighteenth-century English political thought. Pocock argues that this tradition, expressed most articulately in the work of James Harrington (1611-1677), exercised a more significant influence on political debates during the eighteenth century than did liberal political theory put forward by Locke.[32] In the early nineteenth-century reconstruction of liberal ecclesiology religious thinkers such as Thomas Arnold and Coleridge abandoned the jurisprudence paradigm and turned to the civic humanist tradition.

In the civic humanist tradition we discover a

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31. See footnote #6 in chapter nine.

32. J.G.A.Pocock, "The Myth of John Locke and the Obsession with Liberalism" in John Locke, ed. by J.G.A.Pocock and R.Ashcroft (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980). Pocock's critique of the traditional thesis of the dominance of Lockean liberalism has been challenged by a number of scholars such as R.Pecchioli, J.P.Diggins, I.F.Kramnick, Joyce O.Appleby - see Isaac Kramnick, "Republican Revisionism Revisited", American Historical Review 87 (1982) pp.629-664 and Thomas L.Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), ch.4. For Pocock's response to his critics see "Between Gog And Magog: The Republican Thesis and the Ideologia Americana", Journal for the History of Ideas, 48 (1987) pp.325-346.

trajectory of liberal theory which is in real disagreement with a number of key tenets of natural jurisprudence liberalism. First, the civic humanist tradition redeemed the classical Aristotelian approach to political life as a community geared to the pursuit of the good. The political community is seen as a sovereign society that serves the full human good rather than merely functional or administration concerns.

Secondly, within the civic humanist approach there is a concern for the cultivation of political virtues. A healthy republican life is predicated on a dynamic mature citizenry who can transcend their immediate self-interests in the pursuit of the public good. Thus, in contrast with the jurisprudence focus on the administration and protection of individual rights, the republican tradition is more concerned with the conditions for the formation of an active and enlightened citizenry.

Third, civic humanism called for a restoration of a "utopian" imagination in the definition of the nature of the republic. This entailed a more teleological speculation on the nature of the polis as-it-should-be rather than a juridical analysis of society-as-it-is.

Finally, civic humanism tends to perceive a more dynamic interrelationship between religious and

political life. In the civic humanist tradition religion is more than just a potentially volatile public expression of private convictions that needs careful management and regulation for the sake of social peace and political tranquility. Religion is critical to the definition of the full human good as well as critical to the cultivation of virtue in the members of the political community. Thus it has a creative role to play in the emergence of a republican order of political life.

Obviously there are suggestive ecclesiological implications in this civic humanist trajectory of liberal theory. However, there is also substantial evidence of a direct impact of this trajectory upon ecclesiological developments in the first part of the nineteenth century. The liberal jurisprudence tradition in ecclesiology collapsed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, the trajectory of religious liberalism in ecclesiology was reworked and redirected by the contributions of the Liberal Anglican school stemming from Coleridge. Coleridge provided the first major attempt to construct a substantial ecclesiological treatise on the basis of a dialogue with

a civic humanist tradition.[33] Coleridge's ecclesiological disciple, Thomas Arnold, also found that the heroic republican tradition was a much more congenial tradition than that of Lockean jurisprudence. For Arnold the basic error made by liberal jurisprudence and Latitudinarianism was the truncated vision of the nature of the state proposed by these theories. Arnold's ecclesiology was forged in dialogue with a civic humanist concept of the state as a republican society which was responsible for the pursuit of the total human good. Arnold welcomed the civic humanist insistence on the close relationship between religion and politics.

Arnold attempted to overcome the overt secularization of political and religious community characteristic of the jurisprudence tradition by employing a key concept in the nineteenth-century revision of religious liberalism, namely, the concept of immanence. The doctrine of immanence allowed liberalism to come to terms with the modern pietistic accent on the centrality of religious experience without buying into traditional concepts of the supernatural. With this

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33. John Morrow, "The National Church in Coleridge's Church and State: A Response to Allen: 47 (1986) pp.640-652; J.D.Coates, "Coleridge's Dept to Harrington" Journal for the History of Ideas 38 (1977) pp.501-508.

intellectual tool Arnold was able to argue that there is no strict separation of the sacred and the profane in Christian ecclesial life. Therefore, he stressed the need for a more integrated approach to political and ecclesiastical reform.

Arnold's contribution to the tradition of religious liberalism proved to be significant. His bullish confidence in the essential convergence of Christianity and the liberalized Victorian state characterized religious liberalism until the First World War.[34] Today he is commonly acknowledged as the father of modern English religious liberalism. However, it should be noted that Arnold promoted a substantial critique and revision of religious liberalism. He provided a way around some serious limitations in the previous paradigm such as its minimalistic approach to public morality in liberal jurisprudence and its failure to provide a meaningful approach to religious experience.

Thus, when Newman launched his conservative

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[34]. Meriol Trevor's very engaging study, The Arnolds (London: The Bodley Head, 1973), portrays the Thomas Arnold and his family as a unique archetype of the spirit of Victorian England. Arnold, like most liberals from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, leaned to Erastianism. This fact should not be too surprising. The various trajectories of liberalism converged in their critique of the church as an independent sacral authoritative institution. The most effective vehicle to curb ecclesiastical and clerical power was the liberal state.

rebuttal of religious "liberalism" during the 1830s, he found himself fighting on two fronts. On the one hand he had to tackle the claims of the latitudinarian school and on the other a new breed of Coleridgean liberals represented by men such as Thomas Arnold, Joseph Hare, Bishop Connop Thirwall, Henry Milman, and John Sterling. Yet, both schools of thought were recognizably "liberal". While Arnold did employ a very different paradigm to that of his earlier liberal ancestors, nevertheless there are still clear lines of continuity between the two trajectories. This brings us to an important element in the task of tradition analysis. The distinction between a major tradition such as liberalism and its various trajectories such as liberal jurisprudence, civic humanism, or twentieth-century social welfare liberalism, draws attention to the need to discriminate between principles central to the main tradition and principles peculiar to a specific trajectory. As the tradition develops certain principles endure and are reinforced. Others prove to be relative to a particular trajectory. Some tenets, though central to a particular trajectory, may be largely accidental to the tradition as a whole. For example, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the laissez-faire concept of the state seemed

to be a pivotal element in the liberal agenda. Today this principle is identified with neo-conservative ideology. By the late nineteenth century liberals were beginning to argue for a more active involvement of the state in the social and economic spheres of society.[35] Similarly, in the interpretation of a tradition such as religious liberalism one can err through an anachronism of the past, presuming that issues critical to previous debates (e.g. Erastianism) are still central to that tradition, as well as an anachronism of the present, projecting contemporary debates into one's interpretation of earlier contributions.

Thus, in elucidating the relationship between Enlightenment social theory and the development of a tradition of ecclesiology it is important to identify this emerging core as well as clarify the major trajectories, shifts, and revisions. Those principles which endure in the liberal tradition such as tolerance, equality of legal and political rights, or the principle of consensus, emerge as the constitutive principles of that tradition. Similarly in the broad liberal tradition of ecclesiology from Chillingworth to Hans Küng a number of key conclusions can be identified:

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35. See Manning's discussion of this shift in liberal thought, "For and Against Laissez-faire", in Liberalism, pp.94-107.

1. that the laity constitute the church; that there is no fundamental difference between the clerical and lay order; that structures of authority in the church should reflect the key role of the laity;

2. that church institutions are a product of human experience and prudence and are to be adapted to changing needs, perspectives, and circumstances; institutional structures such as the episcopal order are not essentially sacred or immutable;

3. that there is not a significant distinction between the criteria by which we judge the institutional life of the church and that of society as a whole;

4. that the imposition of authoritative doctrine must be repudiated; the church and church authorities should be tolerant and comprehensive reflecting the variety and plurality of opinion within Christian society as a whole;

5. that the values of moderation, tolerance, and the right of personal dissent should be enshrined in ecclesial life;

6. that traditional Christian ecclesiology is subject to a number of theological errors which must be corrected: doctrinalism, authoritarianism, clericalism, supernaturalism ritualism, triumphalism, etc.;

7. that the liberal approach to ecclesiology is in keeping with the movement of the New Testament away from the legalism and exclusivism of Judaism; furthermore, the liberal recognition of the value of pluralism allows for a greater appreciation of the full range of ecclesiological and theological options generated by the primitive Christian tradition.

These core conclusions are preserved and developed in and through the important shifts that occur in the history of liberal argument in ecclesiology. They represent a broad ecclesiological charter which is constitutive for the tradition of religious liberalism.

As new challenges arise new arguments are devised to validate and develop this distinctive ecclesiological stance.

Furthermore, the major shifts and developments which occur in a tradition are not just the product of some inner logic or internal evolution. Questions which may have been the focus for considerable intellectual debate in an earlier period may simply drop out of sight. New questions emerge which entail a significant internal development of the tradition in order to effect a successful response. The work of J.S.Mill marks a significant revision of liberalism beyond the limits of the Benthamite utilitarianism that dominated the tradition in the first part of the nineteenth century. The work of Liberal Anglicans such as Coleridge, Arnold, Milman, and Hare marks a major departure from the confines of Latitudinarian ecclesiology.

Furthermore, these shifts and developments are often triggered by encountering and engaging debates generated outside of the confines of a given intellectual tradition. Traditions do not normally develop in self-contained isolation. The critical questions raised by alternative traditions need to be addressed not begged. The development of liberal theory

in the first part of the nineteenth century was marked by significant revisions and updating in response to new questions and concerns posed by conservative and Romantic critics of the Westminster school of liberalism. In the transition from the liberal theory of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill to that of John Stuart Mill and later liberal idealists such as T.H.Green we see an engagement, not a repudiation, of the problematics generated by conservative theorists. Similarly, the reconstruction of Liberal Anglican ecclesiology during the first part of the nineteenth century has to be understood in part as a response to a fundamental challenge to the tradition of religious liberalism posed by the conservative-minded pietist revival in eighteenth and nineteenth-century English religious culture.

Finally, an understanding of the unfolding history of a line of argument in ecclesiology such as religious liberalism, its links to trajectories in social theory, and the core constitutive principles of that argument as it emerges into an identifiable tradition of discourse, is also critical for a proper evaluation of those ecclesiological traditions which enter into debate with it. For example, religious liberalism defines a set of questions and issues that conservative ecclesiologies

must respond to and radical ecclesiologies must go beyond. It is true that conservative and radical ecclesiological approaches may beg the critical issues raised by the liberal argument and insist on more orthodox or radical positions by unreasoned assertion and theological manifesto. Such reactionary approaches offer little in the way of a significant ecclesiological contribution. But more critical theological options are available. For example, Newman's major contributions can be read as attempts to engage the liberal tradition of his day, reason through its major arguments, and rebut the core conclusions listed above. In attempting to reason through to more orthodox ecclesiological positions Newman actually integrated into his own argument many of the critical concerns of the liberal tradition, such as the problem of the historicity of doctrine and institutions, the role of the laity, and the problem of the subjective character of religious knowledge. Thus a proper assessment of Newman's conservative contribution cannot be attained without a close reading of the tradition of argument he was challenging. In challenging the liberal argument Newman was not repudiating the critical problematics raised by the Enlightenment. Rather he was rebutting the liberal treatment of those problematics and

developing another line of argument in response to those issues. Thus, Newman "the conservative" proved to be as significant a voice in the theological debates engendered within the Enlightenment as Arnold "the liberal". In fact, the Enlightenment itself emerges as a unique type of debate that cannot be simplistically equated with any one of the various lines of argument within that debate.

2. Enlightenment Debates in Modern Ecclesiology

The first task attempts to provide an intellectual history of conflicting lines of argument within Enlightenment debates. It is important to identify the various traditions and tradition-trajectories of Enlightenment thought. However, the delineation of the specific trajectories of the Enlightenment may not clarify the critical problematics that have to be addressed in any rational resolution of the conflicts characteristic of modern ecclesiology.

This brings us to our second concern, namely the need to clarify some of the basic conceptual or methodological problems that underlie the political and

ecclesiological debates that were specific to the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment posed a new set of methodological problems for debate. New questions arose out of Enlightenment insights into the historicity of institutions and values, the capacity of human freedom for "self-determination", the possibility of nurturing an enlightened public, the subjectivity of human rationality, and the discovery of the crucial role of non-political forms of social organization. Questions were raised which proved to be intractable in the confines of traditional political theories or ecclesiologies. The identification of these core theoretical questions targeted by the various traditions of Enlightenment social and political theory should provide a more inclusive and more accurate identification of the critical intellectual debate that constitutes the Enlightenment in all its conflicting manifestations and options. Furthermore, in terms of the development of modern ecclesiology there is a need to determine whether a particular reconstruction of ecclesiology has truly engaged and successfully responded to the critical questions posed by the Enlightenment debate.

I will try to summarize a few of the distinctive problematics posed by Enlightenment thought, how they

were handled by the liberal and conservative trajectories of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and their impact on ecclesiological reflection.

First, given the recognition of the historicity, plurality, and mutability of public institutions, traditions, and values, can any "normative" institutions, traditions, or values be established?

The Enlightenment accent on the historicity and mutability of human experience can express itself in a variety of different ways.[36] Jurisprudence liberal theories adopted an "empiricist" approach to human history. Liberalism was acutely aware of the essentially historical character of public norms, traditions, and institutions. However, liberalism treated history as brute a-rational data laden with particularity, subjectivity, reflecting of the interests of groups and individuals. The traditions, norms, and

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36. A popular criticism of 18th century Enlightenment thought is that it has an a-historical bent in contrast to the historicist accent evident in the Romantic reaction. Ernst Cassirer points out that the Romantic appreciation of history was deeply indebted to the "decisive pioneer work" of Enlightenment theorists; "The Conquest of the Historical World" in The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, ch.5, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951). For an analysis of the emergence of historicism see P.Reill, The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

institutions generated by history cannot be treated as absolute or authoritative.

Having relativized the norms and institutions deposited by history, liberal jurisprudence proceeded to argue that one could discover certain objective procedural "rules" through an analysis of human nature and human sociality as-it-is detached from the weight of dubious historical accretions. This analysis, such as utilitarian or social contract theory, should lead to the identification of certain norms applicable across diverse historical and cultural communities.[37]

Conservative theories are marked by a more thoroughgoing historicist approach to human experience. The rise of "historicism" was closely associated with the conservative watershed in the enlightenment. Three aspects stand out here. First, conservatives took issue with reductionist approaches to history. Human history was seen as value-laden, demanding interpretation rather than reductionist analysis. Secondly, conservatives argued that the fact of historical change, plurality, debate, and conflict does not ineluctably lead to the

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[37]. An updated liberal version of this attempt to gage political rules on the basis of analysis devoid of historical content is offered in A Theory of Justice, by John Rawls, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971). See his comments on the "original position" and the "veil of ignorance" (chapter three).

liberal categorical imperatives: "there are no absolutes, therefore, be open, be tolerant, be flexible." Absolutes can be mediated, unfolded, expressed, in and through the flux of human history, plurality, and conflict. Normative historical institutions and traditions can be established. Thirdly, conservatives reacted strongly against the tendency of liberals to run roughshod over cultural and historical differences in their quest for certain universal procedural rules of human behaviour. They argued that this approach failed to take human history seriously. Patterns of human experience differ significantly given their cultural and historical contexts. The concept of an analysis of a human "nature" which is bracketed from history is rejected as an abstraction.

The Enlightenment recognition of the essential historicity of human community raised critical questions for any ecclesiology attempting to evaluate what is normative in religious institutions, traditions, and doctrines.[38] The various ecclesiological trajectories

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38. An informative discussion of the impact of the historicist shift in German ecclesiology is provided by Donald J.Dietrich, "German Historicism and the Changing Image of the Church, 1780-1820", Theological Studies, 42(1981), pp.46-73. I would agree with Dietrich's critique of the popular academic tendency to emphasize the a-historical character of the Enlightenment, (see

of modern theologies tend to fall in line with the different lines of argument developed in Enlightenment social theory. Religious liberalism employed Enlightenment insights into the essential historicity of norms, traditions, and institutions in order to relativize traditional doctrines and church institutions. Religious liberalism also attempted to discern certain common underlying patterns of religiosity in human nature that are cross-cultural and pre-doctrinal.

Religious conservatives reasoned towards solutions which would underline the normativity of certain ecclesial institutions, doctrines, and institutions. In some cases, they opted for a radical historicism which denied the possibility of finding any normative standards external to a particular historical culture. Since there is no way out of one's historical particularity, therefore, a normative ecclesiological standpoint can only be achieved through commitment to and participation in a particular historical tradition. This historical fideism is reflected in the works of De Bonald and De Maistre. Others, such as Newman, argued

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pp.46-53). However, Dietrich sees that Enlightenment contribution largely restricted to the German Aufkärung. He tends to concur with the popular view of the rationalist a-historical character of the Franco-British phase of the Enlightenment (pp.46).

that patterns of rational development can be discovered in evolution of historical traditions.[39] Normative doctrinal and ecclesial developments within a tradition can be identified. Thus one's commitment to a particular ecclesial tradition is capable of rational explanation and justification vis-a-vis alternate ecclesial traditions.

Secondly, given the Enlightenment recognition of the power of self-determination, the recognition of the human power to shape and control social environment, are there any ways in which this freedom is situated or limited?

At the risk of some oversimplification one might say that pre-Enlightenment thought perceived human community to be an expression of an attunement to an objective pre-given order. Within that order human intentionality and agency was significant however it was not foundational for the order itself. Enlightenment thought perceived the fundamental contours of social and political order to be a product of human intentionality and agency.

This feature might appear to be more readily

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39. J.H.Newman, "The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine" Oxford University Sermons, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1900); An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, ed. J.M.Cameron (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

apparent in liberal and radical theory than it is in conservatism. Lockean social contract theory sees society as the product of the enlightened choices of rational self-interested individuals. Radicalism stresses the need for a corporate act of self-determination, a social revolution. However, in contrast to the liberal and radical moves towards self-determination conservatism seemed to echo the classicist belief in the existence of a pre-given order that must be preserved. Conservative social theorists such as Edmund Burke expressed serious reservations about the quest for unrestricted freedom, autonomy, and self-determination. Did this represent a pre-Enlightenment failure to appreciate the critical power of human self-determination?

It is arguable that the conservative critique was articulated in an attempt to raise critical questions about the "architectonic" power of human intentionality and agency rather than to simply jettison the question. Conservatives recognized the critical function of this factor but attempted to provide a different kind of interpretative framework for the analysis of the issue. This framework highlighted two features in this debate. First, against liberal social theory it argued that the self-defining power of human intentionality and agency

was manifested primarily in communal achievements rather than in the calculative acts of self-interested individuals. Thus Burke argued that,

> every sort of moral, every sort of civil, every sort of politic institution (are necessary) in order to build up that wonderful structure, Man; whose prerogative it is, to be in a great degree a creature of his own making.[40]

Secondly, against radical social theory conservatism argued that the architectonic act of communal self-determination is a slow cumulative historical development rather than the product of ongoing revolutionary conflicts and struggles. The process was a gradual unfolding of a civilization rather than a global abrupt enforced transition. The process of civilization is incremental. Tradition embodies a rich matrix of norms and practices generated by ongoing acts of human intentionality and agency. Furthermore, the preservation and development of tradition demanded ongoing acts of re-appropriation and reformation. This process is fragile. It is capable of being radically disrupted by irresponsible public actors. Revolutionary political action tends to disrupt the civilizational process, leads to massive social disorganization, the breakdown of community and values, and the imposition of

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40. Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp.189

totalitarian means of social control.

In pursuing and analyzing this connection between revolutionary action and massive social disorganization conservatives were in fact paying a back-handed compliment to the critical destructive impact of human agency upon social and political order. However, the main contribution of conservatism was not its important and ongoing critique of revolutionary movements but its insights into the long-term historical and communal determinants of human freedom. The concept of freedom as absolute "self-dependence" - liberation from the restraints of history, traditions, norms - is rejected. Unsituated freedom is seen as empty and impoverished. Freedom needs to be situated and embodied by language, symbols, institutions, traditions, and patterns of life.[41] The range and depth of human freedom is enriched and expanded by strong moral and religious traditions.

These debates over the nature of human freedom and its relation to history, traditions, and community underlie many serious disagreements in modern ecclesiology. Should historical ecclesial institutions, doctrines, and practices be revised and reformed so that

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41. See Charles Taylor's discussion of the problem of freedom in Hegel and Modern Society, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.154-166.

they will function in such a way that they will express the evolving consensus of rational free individuals?[42] Should ecclesial institutions, doctrines, and practices be radically transformed so that they will support the movements of social liberation for the oppressed in society?[43] Or can these historic institutions, doctrines, and practices be seen as unique vehicles for achieving a type of freedom not reducible to the liberal individualistic or radical liberationist variants?

Third, the Enlightenment recognition of the critical role of human agency in the society also led to a stress on the importance of an enlightened political authority and the formation of a self-conscious enlightened public as the dynamic matrix of communal life. The promotion of enlightenment within the public realm (church or state) was seen to be critical for two reasons. First, there was this new recognition that the social world was profoundly dependent on human intentionality and agency. It was not some pre-determined order unresponsive to enlightened action. Secondly, given the historical nature of human

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42. This is Richard McBrien's position, The Remaking of the Church: A Program of Reform (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

43. Leonardo Boff, Church, Charism and Power, (New York: Crossroad, 1985).

communities, church and state must be capable of enlightened response to evolving circumstances. The capacity to stand unaltered in the midst of the flux of historical development came to be seen as a sign of an unhealthy reification of communal life rather than a sign of strength. Even conservative theologians such as Newman insisted on the need for an enlightened response to historical development:

> ...whatever be the risk of corruption from intercourse with the world around...such a risk must be undergone...In a higher world it is otherwise; but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often...one cause of corruption in religion is the refusal to follow the course of doctrine as it moves on, and an obstinacy in the notions of the past.[44]

However, the question of the nature of enlightened public action and the criteria for the formation of an enlightened community were still open to debate. Liberals perceived the formation of an enlightened community to be dependent upon the emergence of a non-coerced consensus of rational self-interested individuals. For most liberals the weight of institutions, traditions, and customs, was an impediment to the formation of an enlightened public consensus.

For conservatives the process of enlightenment works itself out through the cumulative achievements of

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[44]. J.H.Newman, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, pp.100, 120.

historical communities rather than the a-historical convergence of individually enlightened opinions. Conservatives such as Newman and Moehler contributed to the development of the modern notion of tradition. Newman rejected the pre-enlightenment concepts which perceived tradition to be a static deposit of doctrines and institutions. Traditions were dynamic historical entities subject to change and development.[45]

Tradition, historic institutions, customs, were seen to aid the process of enlightenment rather than conflict with it. The substantive moral and religious values deposited in traditions cannot be shelved in the name of enlightenment. This is the heart of Burke's influential critique of liberal and radical theory in his Reflections on the Revolution in France. Tradition is not a handicap but a central feature in the process of enlightenment. The flip side of this is the contention that tradition can only be adequately appreciated and promoted by an educated and enlightened

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45. Günter Biemer, Newman on Tradition, (Freiburg: Herder, 1967); Edward Shills, Tradition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) and Whose Justice? Which Rationality?. D.J.Dietrich emphasizes the importance of the contribution of Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853) in the forging a new concept of tradition and development for modern ecclesiology, "German Historicism and the Changing Image of the Church", pp.61-71.

public appreciative of the values embodied in their historic traditions. Tradition, Newman argues, is not adequately transmitted by rote memory and doltish conformity. It demands meaningful reflective appropriation.[46]

Furthermore, the task of enlightenment raises questions concerning the institutional or communal vehicles of enlightenment in modern culture. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see numerous experiments in the area of education. In England and France the national churches began to promote national educational systems based on a confessional ethos. Workers groups and unions developed educational institutes. By the end of the nineteenth century European nation-states were aggressively insisting on their monopoly over the educational field.

Underlying the heated nineteenth-century debates between liberals and conservative confessionalists over appropriate strategies for the development of national educational systems there is the broader theoretical question of the real seats of public authority directing the process of enlightenment. For the liberals it is "enlightened public opinion" - a term of scorn for the

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46. John Henry Newman, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, pp.100,120.

conservative, an altar to be bowed before for the liberal. In the jurisprudence tradition enlightened public opinion represented the consensus of rational self-interested individuals free of the restrictions and inhibitions of custom. Nineteenth-century liberal Anglicans emphasized the need for a more substantive civic ethos to inform liberal order than a public opinion formed by mere clusters of individual self-interest. Accordingly, they proposed an education of public opinion through the work of a broad representative class of ethical, religious, and professional opinion leaders, the "clerisy".

Conservatives recognized that given the pluralism and rate of change in modern societies tradition could not simply be passed by social osmosis. Traditions themselves would be going through significant developments that would need more conscious enlightened direction. If the continuity of a normative tradition was to be maintained the process of change would have to be regulated by an authority grounded in the very tradition it regulates. Conservatives looked to historic institutions to ensure the continuity of a tradition as well as guide its development. In the English conservative political tradition the historic institutions of the British Constitution (Parliament,

Crown, common law) were seen as the carriers of tradition.[47]

Debates over the question of the dynamics of enlightenment are reflected in modern ecclesiological developments. In the nineteenth century the "magisterial" role of the church became a focus of ecclesiological debate in a way that it had never been before. In England conservative Anglicans looked to a dynamic episcopacy to provide the kind of vibrant decisive leadership that would be needed to direct tradition and form an enlightened laity capable of dealing with the modern world. Liberal Anglicans developed the concept of "clerisy" - a class of moral and religious educators (clergy, academics, theologians, educated laity, etc.) that are diffused through the society. The clerisy do not teach authoritatively, rather they promote an enlightened dialogue and debate over moral and religious values in society. Their primary responsibility is to equip the public with the necessary intellectual, moral, and religious skills to fully participate in this ongoing enlightened dialogue. In the Catholic Church this debate led to a major

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47. J.G.A.Pocock, Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); "Burke and the Ancient Constitution: A Problem in the History of Ideas", in Politics, Language, and Time (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

controversy over the conservative claims made for the papacy as the unique institutional vehicle to provide enlightened authoritative guidance for tradition of the Church. The Ultramontanist movement argued that an enlightened Catholic public would be the product of a direct and authoritative teaching relationship between the papacy and the laity. Liberal Catholicism from Dollinger to Küng has looked to the evolving sensus fidelium as the real source of magisterial authority. Catholic liberalism underlined the importance of the theological academia as a tool for the ongoing formation and enlightenment of the laity. Liberals noted correctly that the modern doctrine of papal infallibility represented a significant development beyond more traditional concepts.[48] But then, for that matter, the liberal Catholic concept of sensus fidelium also represented a significant evolution of theological reflection. Both schools were grappling with a new problematic demanding new solutions.

Fourth, these Enlightenment concerns for human freedom and the "dialectics of enlightenment" are intimately linked to questions concerning the nature and horizons of human rationality in ethics and religion.

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48. See Hans Küng, Infallible?, An Enquiry, ch.2, (London and Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1971).

The resolution of these questions becomes of central significance in the enterprise of constructing a viable theory of society or theology of the church.

Enlightenment theory is characterized by its critical focus on the problem of human rationality.[49] The focus on epistemological and psychological considerations by major social philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Hume, or Hegel, is indicative of the anthropocentric "turn towards the subject" within Enlightenment theory. Given this recognition of the subjective or inter-subjective character of human rationality, a critical question is posed. Is there any justification for public authoritative norms or doctrines (in politics, morals, or religion) which command assent and should be publically enforced?

Within the liberal tradition from John Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding to Bentham's Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, rationality is seen as a calculative act of the individual - the objective weighing of diverse options in the light of the needs and interests of the individual. Rationality is individualistic. Reason is not intrinsically related to society or history.

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[49]. See Cassirer's discussion in The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, "Psychology and Epistemology" (ch.3), (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951).

Indeed, to make truly clear choices the individual must detach himself or herself from their network of social relations and commitments, customs and prejudices. Rationality is seen as a move to individual self-possession and self-determination. The individualistic calculative character of Lockean rationality is re-enacted in Lockean social theory in his concept of the social contract. Individuals forge a society by calculating which forms of social and political order will most adequately meet their needs and interests.

Given this approach to rationality liberalism rejected the legitimacy of public authoritative norms that stand over and against the individual. The only values which could receive rational justification were liberal procedural rules such as mutual tolerance, individual freedom, human rights - values which ensured the freedom of the individual in making rational self-interested choices.

Conservative theorist diverge significantly from liberals in the area of epistemology. Nevertheless, the self-critical focus on the dynamics of human reason is still central to their contribution. Conservatism, as we have seen, stresses the communal historical character of moral and religious reason. The progress of reason is linked to history and community - it is not simply

calculative and individualistic. In England, British historians stressed the critical role of institutions and tradition in generating and preserving key human values and norms. In Germany thinkers such as Herder and Hegel attempted to highlight the critical role of history and community in the progress of human insight and rationality. Rationality was seen to be a communal inter-subjective achievement. Thus public norms and values deposited by history have a certain weight or authority. They should be approached in a spirit of "trust" or "deference".

How have these issues affected ecclesiology? In the past ecclesiological disagreements would be plagued by debates over the status of specific theological doctrines. Today, ecclesiological disagreement focusses on foundational conflicts over the nature of doctrine itself and the public authority of doctrine. Ecclesiologically religious liberalism insisted on the elimination of the doctrinal component from ecclesial life. The right to personal "dissent" emerges as a much more critical ecclesial imperative than the authority of church doctrine.

Conservatives attempted to retrieve the traditional accent on the importance of public authoritative norms. This epistemological approach was reflected in many of

the important ecclesiological contributions in nineteenth-century English religious thought.[50] There was a new insistence on the importance of the doctrinal principle in Christian ecclesial life.[51] For Newman the goal of an undogmatic faith is illusory. Newman sees the dogmatic dimension as an integral dimension of religious experience.

> It is very well for educated persons, at their ease, with few cares, or in the joyous time of youth, to argue and speculate about the impalpableness and versatility of the divine message, its chameleon-changeableness, its adaptation to each fresh mind it meets; but when men are conscious of sin, are sorrowful, are weighed down, are desponding, they ask for something to lean on, something external to themselves. It will not do to tell them that whatever they at present hold as true, is enough. They want to be assured that what seems to them true, is true; they want something to lean on, holier, diviner, more stable than their own minds. They have an instinctive feeling that there is an external, eternal truth which is their only stay; and it mocks them, after being told of a Revelation, to be assured, next, that Revelation tells us nothing certain, nothing which we do not know without it, nothing distinct from our own impressions concerning it, whatever they may be, -

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50. See John Coulson's discussion of these debates in Newman and the Commmon Tradition: A Study in the Language of Church and Society, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

51. Walter H. Conser's study of conservative theological opinion in the nineteenth century, Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England and America, (Mason: Mercer University Press, 1984), illustrates the concern for the defense of the concept of authoritative doctrine and the central place of this issue in nineteenth century ecclesiological debates.

> nothing such, as to exist independently of that shape and colour into which our own individual mind happens to throw it... Religion cannot but be dogmatic; it ever has been. All religions have had doctrines; all have professed to carry with them the benefits which could be enjoyed only on condition of believing the word of a supernatural informant, that is, of embracing some doctrines or other.[52]

In this passage Newman's analysis of religious doctrine is more psychological than epistemological. In the Grammar of Assent Newman attempted to work out an epistemological argument to complement his psychological argument for the importance of religious truth claims.[53] In conservative theological traditions doctrinal certitudes remain a critical feature defining the parameters of ecclesiological discourse and ecclesial life.

Fifth, given the Enlightenment recognition of the critical significance of a number of key non-political factors in communal order what is the status of the political and institutional dimensions of communal life in the light of these core non-political factors?

This methodological characteristic is quite central yet tends to be overlooked by historians of religious

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52. John Henry Newman, Essays and Sketches, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1948), vol.1, pp.222-223.

53. John Henry Newman, An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent ed. I.T.Kerr, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985)

thought. Social and political theorists have been more sensitive to this shift of focus in enlightenment theory from the political to the societal as the key dynamic in communal life. Classical political thought before the Enlightenment had no genuine theory of the "social" - that is, those dimensions of communal life which are not a function of political organization such as family, kinship groups, or the economy. In classical political thought the public world was a "political" world - a world of order, rule, hierarchy, authority, jurisdiction, institutionality, and law. The human community was interpreted and explained through the language of politics. The political dimension was perceived to be central to the cohesiveness and life of human communities whether religious or civil. If the political order dissolved the community dissolved.

It is only with the Enlightenment that we see the full emergence of a concept of the "social" as a dimension of communal life capable of being distinguished from the realm of political order.[54] Thus in the Enlightenment we have the rise of "social theory" and sociology as a distinct discipline from that

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[54]. W.G.Runciman, Social Science and Political Theory, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), ch.2; Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1960), chs.9-10.

of "political theory". Enlightenment theorists recognized the possibility of significant forms of social existence (e.g. capitalist economies) that did not have to be organized along political lines. In the eighteenth century Adam Smith explored the capacity of a free market system to generate productive social and economic interaction without direct political control and manipulation. Sheldon Wolin points out that there was a strong tendency to look upon the political as artificial and secondary in the formation of community in Enlightenment thought:

> The main trends in political thought, irrespective of national or ideological variations, have worked towards the same end: the erosion of the distinctly political...the basic concept which was pitted against the political was "society". It was a fundamental notion common to such contradictory ideologies as liberalism and conservatism, socialism and reaction, anarchism and managerialism.[55]

Wolin argues that Enlightenment thought reduced politics to an entirely derivative and secondary form of activity. All distinctly political phenomena were seen as capable of being reduced to and explained by more fundamental social or economic factors. For Locke, Adam Smith, Bonald, Burke, Rousseau, and Marx, it was society rather than polity that formed the ground of communal

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55. Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.290.

life.

Different approaches could be taken to the analysis of the core elements of society. Liberals tended to stress the significance of the free market, voluntary interest groups and associations. These diverse free-exchange associations were the stuff of social life and the function of government was to provide an ordered space for individuals to enter into these voluntary associations to operate as freely as possible.

Conservatives tended to highlight the critical significance of non-voluntary "historic" social entities, i.e social groupings which had a history and tradition: families, kinship groups, religious communities, corporations, guilds, ethic and cultural communities. These were perceived to be the organic communities in which individuals were nurtured. These mediating communities were seen to have corporate personalities with rights and privileges that had to be respected and responded to by the state. This tradition of discourse had a major impact upon religious thinking in the nineteenth century.

The impact of the shift from the political to the social made itself felt with considerable force in the analysis of the nature of the church. In the pre-Enlightenment period the church was perceived to be a

"regnum" a kingdom (Catholic) or a "polity" (Calvin). Its institutions, laws, offices, and lines of jurisdiction were perceived to be divinely ordained in scripture and tradition. Whether the proposed government of the church was papal, episcopal, or presbyterial, each denomination claimed that some form of political order was central to ecclesial life.

By the nineteenth century this kind of approach had been undermined by the denigration of political order. Politics came to be seen as functional, artificial and secondary. Government as Burke stated was simply "a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants". Accordingly, the core of the church must be found in its social life not its political order. Theologians began to stress the organic social non-political dimensions of ecclesial life. In the Catholic theology the traditional term used to describe the church was the politically charged concept of kingdom or "regnum". After a lengthy debate in Schemata of Vatican I this concept was successfully challenged and replaced by a definition of the church as a "true and perfect society".[56] Increasingly the emphasis is taken off the

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[56]. Peter Granfield and F.X.Lawlor argue that this shift in focus was made in response to new perspectives generated by the "enlightenment philosophy of society". Peter Granfield, "The Church as Societas Perfecta in the Schemata of Vatican I", Church History, 48(1979),

political dimension and shifted to the non-political dimensions of church life - the church as a mystical body, and organic communion of believers, people of God. Greater attention to the vocation of the laity is reflective of a shift of focus from more institutionally defined roles (clergy) to more broad based lay ecclesial societies. These dimensions are now seen to be the heart of ecclesial life. The institutional order, though important, especially in the Catholic tradition, begins to be seen as serving a more functional role (teaching, ruling) rather than the constitutive force of the community.

This shift of emphasis is a serious one since it can be very disruptive for traditional concepts of the foundational significance and sacrality of certain institutional roles, actions, and structures of authority in the Church. An uncritical acceptance of this shift results in a theological "denigration of the political" which runs roughshod over basic features of most pre-Enlightenment theologies of the Church. A characteristic strategy of conservative ecclesiologies in the Catholic tradition is their attempt to speak to the Enlightenment discovery of the "social" in such a

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pp.421-446; F.X.Lawlor, "Society (in Theology)", New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol.13, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) pp.394-5.

way that the traditional respect for critical significance of the "institutional" dimensions of the church is maintained.

These five areas of ecclesiological debate over the historicity of church institutions, the question of freedom and dissent, the magisterial function of the church, the problem of doctrine, and the redefinition of the church in the light of non-institutional dimensions of ecclesial life, do not by any means exhaust the debates peculiar to modern ecclesiology. Other problematics would include the modern concept of culture and the question of the relationship between church and culture or the emergence of the discipline of social ethics and its ecclesiological analogues in Christian social doctrine and the redefinition of the nature of the church in the light of its social mission. All these concerns raise fundamentally new problematics for the discipline of ecclesiology. They have generated divisive debates that are the product of ecclesiological traditions grappling with these peculiarly Enlightenment problems.

The achievements of pre-Enlightenment scholastic Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Roman Catholic theology do not provide ready-made resolutions for these debates. Yet the intellectual survival of a pre-Enlightenment

tradition of ecclesiology will depend upon its capacity for significant ecclesiological development. Successful responses to the new debates have to be forged in the context of a close dialogue with the traditions of Enlightenment social and political thought which generated these concerns. The need to understand the nature of these debates underlines once again the importance of the first interpretive task - the need for a historical analysis of the evolution of these debates in the various lines of argument generated by the dialogue between ecclesiology and Enlightenment social theory during the modern era.

Furthermore, if pre-Enlightenment traditions of ecclesiological discourse are largely deaf to the concerns of modern ecclesiological debates, Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment traditions often suffer from a serious bias in their understanding of the nature of the debates. Modern liberal, conservative, or radical ecclesiologies often betray a naivete in their presumption that the resolution of a particular ecclesiological issue is fairly self-evident. This naivete is usually the product of an uncritical allegiance to a particular resolution of a novel problematic that has not been subject to an open theological debate in the light of the full range of

objections and insights generated by the various trajectories of Enlightenment thought. The failure to appreciate and engage the new ecclesiological issues leads to a theological impasse. Conflicting positions in modern ecclesiology appear to be incapable of being subject to rational theological debate. Culling out and clarifying these underlying disagreements over the problems of history, freedom, religious truth, institutionality, etc., should be an important step towards more constructive debate in contemporary ecclesiology.

3. Conclusion: The Question of Development in an Ecclesiological Tradition

Ideally, the creative interaction between ecclesiology and modern social and political theory would provide the context for the construction of a new and conceptually enriched ecclesiological synthesis that is capable of meeting and successfully responding to the critical questions and problems generated by the Enlightenment while maintaining real continuity with a mainstream tradition of ecclesiological discourse that

reaches back into pre-modern Christian history.[57]

In this assessment of the capacity of a normative tradition to respond to the central problems of the Enlightenment it is likely that certain ecclesiological traditions will betray serious inadequacies. Such traditions will be unable to creatively respond to the critical concerns and questions presented by the enlightenment without jeopardizing their own fundamental principles. The options for such traditions are unattractive. Either the tradition will collapse or it will survive through a fundamentalistic closure to the enterprise of rational enquiry.[58] In either case its existence as discipline of rational enquiry will be terminated. It also signals practical difficulties for the tradition in defining its relationship to the modern world. Chapter seven will provide a discussion of an imaginative conservative ecclesiological synthesis which

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[57]. See MacIntyre's discussion of the "rationality of traditions", the process of "dialectical questioning", and the marks of genuine solutions to epistemological crises, in Which Justice? Which Rationality?, ch.18, esp. pp.358-362.

[58]. It should be pointed out that any normative tradition can effect a fundamentalist closure to the critical concerns of other traditions. Fundamentalism is not just the temptation of the conservative. Liberals and radicals can be as fundamentalistic in their attempts to rule out, rather than rationally engage, questions and objections raised by other traditions.

attempted to bracket out the debates raised by the Enlightenment.

There is another way in which ecclesial traditions can be seriously deflected by this encounter. Communities within a tradition may accommodate new positions, norms, or social theories which break with basic principles of their own ecclesiological tradition. In effect such communities are thrown into a heterodox stance. Their relationship to the normative tradition is marked by confusion, alienation, and ongoing critique and dissent. This is the critique that Newman levels at the Anglican tradition of religious liberalism.

This problem of continuity brings us to our final point. There is a need to test whether a particular reconstruction of ecclesiology in the light of the concerns of Enlightenment social and political theory remains faithful to and constructively develops a normative tradition of ecclesiology. This third task is somewhat more troublesome since it betrays a bent towards a theory of history that is distinctly conservative. This task involves commitment to the thesis that a normative Christian tradition of ecclesiology does exist. Or, somewhat less ambitiously, that some normative Christian traditions of ecclesiology (e.g. a normative Catholic tradition,

Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican, etc.) do exist. A normative tradition is one which develops (in theory and in praxis) a primitive source tradition in such a way that there is an authentic line of continuity between earlier and later developments.

John Henry Newman insisted on the importance of this question of historical continuity for theology and ecclesiology. He underlined the need to develop rational criteria for the interpretation of historical traditions and the assessment of the continuity any specific development in doctrine or practice to a given tradition. Newman directed these concerns to the tradition of English religious liberalism in an attempt to test the tradition on grounds on which he felt it was particularly vulnerable to critique. The problem of Newman's response to the tradition of religious liberalism is the subject of another study. Nevertheless, the questions raised by his work are important for a more comprehensive assessment of the debates and developments generated by the interaction between modern ecclesiology and social theory, and, accordingly, will represent an appropriate juncture for the conclusion of this thesis.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND CHURCH IN THE NATURAL JURISPRUDENCE TRADITION

This study initially began as an attempt to gauge Newman's response to ecclesiological perspectives in the tradition of early nineteenth-century religious liberalism. Newman's relation to the tradition of liberalism has always presented a problem for his interpreters.[1] He stated that he had waged a life-long war against the liberal tradition.[2] Though he condemned it as the "great apostasia", nevertheless, he acknowledged that it was the dominant theological

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[1]. Newman has been interpreted both as a contributor to and an opponent of this tradition. See R. Anderson, "Newman Against the Liberals", L'Osservatore Romano, 30 Sept., 1980; E.Berbusse, "Newman Refutes Contemporary Liberal Theologians", Homiletic and Pastoral Review, 84 (1984), 28-32, 48-53; A.J. Boekraad, "Newman and Modernism", Doctor Communis, 37/3 (1984), 236-255; Mark, S.Burrows, "A Historical Reconsideration of Newman and Liberalism", Scottish Journal of Theology, 40(1987), 399-419; J.M.Cameron, "Newman and Liberalism", Cross Currents, 30(1980), 153-166; J.F.Crosby, "Newman's Witness Against the Spirit of Liberalism in Religion", John Henry Newman, (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1981), 99-126; P.Misner, "The "Liberal" Legacy of J.H.Newman", in Newman and the Modernists, ed.by J.M.Weaver, (Lanham, 1984), 3-24; T.Norris, "Newman and the Liberals: the Strategy and the Struggle, The Irish Theological Quarterly, 53(1987), 1-16.

[2]. Newman's "Biglietto Speech" (May 12, 1879), the speech is found in W.Ward's study, The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman, (London: Longmans,1912) vol.2, pp.459-462.

movement of eighteenth and nineteenth-century English religious thought.[3] His intellectual agenda was shaped by his disagreement and conflict with some of the key positions advanced by the tradition of religious liberalism on questions of the nature of doctrine, authority, and the church.

However, he also expressed enthusiastic support for French Catholic liberals such as Lacordaire and Montalembert.[4] Futhermore he did not beg but engaged the new epistemological and historical debates that were brought to the table by English religious liberals. Thus, he is seen by some as a forerunner of the English modernist movement.

Newman himself was not unaware of the problem he was bequeathing to posterity. He suggested that one of the ways to properly interpret his stance would be, in the first place, to read it as a response to the tradition of English liberal thought.[5] He pointed out that comparisons with the emerging tradition of Catholic liberalism in France were misleading since this tradition was responding to a different type of debate,

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3. ibid., pp.461.

4. J.H.Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua, (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), pp.492

5. ibid., pp.491-2.

a debate responding to the political and religious radicalism of the French revolution.

This does define the context of his debates somewhat more narrowly. However, given the breadth and depth of the English liberal tradition Newman still leaves us with a considerable interpretive task. How can such a broad and influential tradition of thought be meaningfully interpreted? Recently, as I have noted in chapter one, scholars such as Quentin Skinner, Richard Tuck, James Tully, and J.G.A.Pocock have been arguing for a re-assessment of the tradition of English liberalism. They argue for the need to read liberalism in the light of the modern tradition of "natural jurisprudence" stemming from Grotius and developed by theorists such as Hobbes, Selden, Cumberland, Clarke, Locke, Cudworth in England and Pufendorf, Leibniz, and Wolff in Germany. This tradition of thought also had a major influence on Scottish political thought during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[6]

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[6]. Richard Tuck examines the evolution of this tradition of discourse in Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Its impact on the Scottish Enlightenment has been highlighted in numerous studies: for example, Knud Haakonssen, The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and "Natural Law and the Scottish Enlightenment" in Proceedings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, 4; R.H.Campbell and A.S.Skinner

It is a mark of astuteness of Newman's reading of the English intellectual history that he had spotted this "Grotian" line of argument within the tradition of liberalism. However, Newman was far more interested in the theological and ecclesiological contribution of this tradition than in its impact on political theory. He pointed out that there was a history to be written of a tradition of ecclesiological thought that has had a dominant influence on the Anglican tradition during the Enlightenment. At one point he encouraged a colleague, Edward Churton, to direct his historical research to the analysis of this school of thought:

> I wish much you would turn your thoughts to writing an account of Grotianism in our Church...We should be indebted to you for much light on a portion of our history well worth studying. The question of Hales' and Chillingworth's faith would come in. How came Taylor to be so liberal in his Liberty of Prophesying? and how far is Hammond tinctured as regards the sacraments with Grotianism? --
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> After this would follow the history of the

(eds.), The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982); James Moore and Michael Silverthorne, "Gershom Carmichael and the Natural Jurisprudence Tradition in Eighteenth-Century Scotland", in Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Peter Stein, "Law and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Thought" in Scotland in the Age of Improvement, ed. N.T.Phillipson and R.Mitchison, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970).

Cambridge Latitudinarians, and then the Lockites.[7] Churton did not take up this historical research project. The first major study of the tradition of English religious liberalism was the publication of John Tulloch's masterful study of seventeenth-century English liberal thought.[8] Tulloch was an informed apologist rather than a critic of the tradition. His study noted but did not explore the impact of Grotian natural jurisprudence upon ecclesiological reflection in the English tradition of religious liberalism.

The major religious liberals who wrote on the church question during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries situated their ecclesiological reflection within the jurisprudence paradigm. William Chillingworth looked to Hugo Grotius for inspiration. Edward Stillingfleet's authorities included John Selden and Thomas Hobbes, in addition to Grotius and Chillingworth. In the eighteenth century Latitudinarian liberals such as William Warburton and William Paley continued to situate themselves in the Grotian

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7. J.H.Newman, The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, ed. by Gerard Tracey, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), vol.6, Letter to Edward Churton, March 14, 1837.

8. John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972; reprint ed.)

jurisprudence tradition. By the eighteenth century we begin to see the influence of John Locke and especially that of Samuel Pufendorf on this Latitudinarian trajectory of ecclesiological reflection. This substantive dialogue between jurisprudence political thought and Latitudinarian ecclesiology demands some attention.

Natural Jurisprudence Paradigm in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Liberal Thought

The tradition of natural jurisprudence stemming from Grotius is marked by a number of distinctive traits. In this chapter I will be presenting an overview of some of the characteristic features of the jurisprudence political thought in seventeenth-century England rather than a detailed discussion of the history of the tradition.

The natural jurisprudence tradition dispensed with the traditional Aristotelian concept of the political community as a polis geared to the pursuit of excellence, virtue, and the good. It portrayed political society as a functional system which allocates and administers offices, properties, and goods.[9]

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9. J.G.A.Pocock, "Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: a Study of the Relations Between the Civic Humanists and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation

Pre-Enlightenment political theory had stressed the symbiotic relation between ethics and politics. A paradigmatic statement of this interconnection is found in the work of Aristotle.[10] The relation between the political and the ethical is two-fold. In the first place, the political forum is perceived to constitute the unique context for the pursuit of virtue and the disclosure of moral achievement.[11] The political community expands the horizons and possibilities of ethical life for the members of the society. For Plato and Aristotle politics should be systematically ordered to promote the achievement of a certain hierarchy of moral goods and virtues. Thus, politics is the medium to nurture and actualize meaningful ethical decision-making and ethical action.

Secondly, in Aristotelian political thought moral values are embodied in the constitutional forms, laws,

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of Eighteenth-Century Thought", in Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, pp.248-249.

10. Ernest Barker, The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle, (New York: Dover, 1959), pp.240ff. MacIntyre underlines the pivotal function of the polis in the Aristotelian approach to ethics, Whose Justice? Which Rationality, chs.6-8.

11. see Hannah Arendt's discussion in The Human Condition, chs.2,5, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

and institutions of the commonwealth. Politics represents not only a unique context for the pursuit of virtue, it also constitutes an "order" which embodies substantive moral values. Its constitutional forms and institutions are value-laden and can be subject to moral evaluation.

Aristotelian political theory was to be challenged by Augustinian theology. Augustine generated new perspectives on the relationship of morality, politics, and religion. It shifted much of the focus from the polis to the church. Religious community, not political community, became the unique focus for moral achievement. However, at a certain level the Augustinian and Aristotelian visions were capable of a reconciliation. Both positions argued for the critical importance of the institutional setting (ecclesia or polis) for pursuit of fundamental moral and religious goods. Both argued these institutional communities were objective public realities that embodied the good, the holy, or the true.[12]

The natural jurisprudence tradition effected a disengagement of ethics and religion from any essential

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[12]. Alasdair MacIntyre argues that a constructive synthesis of these two traditions was achieved in the work of Aquinas. Whose Justice? Which Rationality?, chs.9-11.

connection to the public institutional dimension of life (church or polity). The liberal reconstruction of social and political theory was rooted in this disengagement as was the Latitudinarian reconstruction of the concept of the church. Political order was now down-geared to serve more tangible interests such as the preservation of life, health, property, trade, civil peace, etc. Politics became relegated to functional jurisprudence - the most adequate allocation of offices and things for the sake of civil peace and order. Institutions function to balance rights and interests rather than nurture virtues and pursue the good. This disengagement also had a very decisive spin-off for the other major institutional order of Western civilization, the church. I would like to explore three main dimensions of this shift: 1) the role of ethics in political community; 2) the secularization of natural law theory; and, 3) the question of tolerance.

1. Ethics and Jurisprudence

First, the jurisprudence tradition rejected the teleological approach in ethics. Aristotelian and Christian ethics developed a concept of "moral excellence". Their method was teleological. It

grounded its ethical and political theory on a vision of man "as he should be" rather than "man as he is".[13] A meaningful interpretation of moral action must be constructed upon insight into the connection between certain acts and certain intrinsically good "ends" which were fundamental to authentic human achievement.[14] These ends articulated a fairly coherent picture of the good life. They also constituted clear standards for discerning the appropriate forms of political or institutional order which were attuned to the cultivation of moral (or religious) excellence.

Aristotelian ethics contended that human acts had a discernible intentional structure. Intention dwelt not only subjectively in motivation but also objectively in the character of the action. Acts were perceived to be intrinsically orientated to objective ends. It was possible to reflect on and gain insight into the

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13. A. MacIntyre, After Virtue, pp.52-53.

14. See MacIntyre's discussion of Aristotelian moral theory in chapter five of After Virtue. This teleological approach towards ethical action continues to have a significant influence in Catholic tradition of moral theology. John Finnis, Germaine Grisez, Joseph Boyle, and William E. May represent a group of Catholic scholars who are collaborating together in a revision and re-articulation of Thomistic ethical theory. See John Finnis, The Fundamentals of Ethics, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983) and Germaine Grisez, assisted by Finnis, Boyle, May, and others, Catholic Moral Principles, vol.1 of a project 4 volume series, The Way of Cur Lord Jesus (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983).

teleological structure of human acts. The function of "practical reason" was to establish the self-evident "basic goods" which action should pursue.[15]

The objective intentionality of acts means that human praxis constituted a coherent public moral language in addition to the subjective moral language of motive, interest, opinion, feeling, need, etc. Meanings and norms dwell not just in the minds of the actors but they also find public concretization in human behaviour itself. Human action is not mute, discrete, quantifiable behaviour. Rather, it is a complex mode of moral expression that has a durable ethical character distinct from the subjective intentions of its authors. Thus, the various expressions of public action (public discourse, deeds, customs, institutions, etc.) cannot be treated as "brute" data, devoid of intrinsic moral significance in themselves. Institutions and socially established practices are integrally related to questions of virtue and vice, moral excellence and corruption.[16]

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[15]. See Grisez's discussion in chapter 5 of Christian Moral Principles and John Finnis's version of the basic goods in Natural Law and Natural Rights, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980) chs.3-5.

[16]. A.MacIntrye provides an interesting account of the relation of "practices", institutions and virtues in After Virtue, pp.187-196.

Natural jurisprudence privatized and subjectivized the concept of moral action. Three features can be noted in the jurisprudence approach to this topic. First, moral actions are the actions of individuals - free, calculative, self-interested individuals. Accordingly, communal modes of action (customs, traditions, institutions) are not really amenable to moral analysis and interpretation. They are of functional significance in the individual's pursuit of his interests. Secondly, the critical moral element lies primarily in the subjective choice, not in the nature of the act. The moral element is to be discerned not from the act in itself but from the character of the agent's subjective choice. Third, there is no objective intentional structure intrinsic to moral acts apart from the personal preferences in the minds of the actors.[17]

This subjectivization of moral action leads to the conclusion that it is a function of the preferences and choices of discrete individuals responding to a social environment that is essentially devoid of any intrinsic moral content. The interests, motives, and decisions of

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17. This was the critique which 17th century Lutheran divines, defending Aristotelian ethics, levelled against Pufendorf. Richard Tuck argues that their assessment was correct, "The Modern Theory of Natural", in The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe, ed. by Anthony Pagden, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.102.

the agent become the only real data for moral analysis.[18]

The jurisprudence tradition of moral theory argued for a grounding of moral theory in a scientific analysis of human nature "as it is". It jettisoned the notion that human nature is intrinsically orientated towards moral excellence. Hobbes and Locke portrayed human nature to be a bundle of appetites and desires in perpetual motion, moving from one object of desire to another without any overriding moral or religious telos. Hobbes states that,

> There is no such Finis ultimis (utmost ayme), nor Summum Bonum (greatest good), as is spoken of in the Books of the old Morall Philosophers...Felicity is a continuall progress of the desire, from one object to another...So that, in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in Death.[19]

Neither man nor community are intrinsically orientated towards a path of moral excellence or virtue. The emerging tradition of natural jurisprudence firmly dismissed the classical focus on virtue. Locke states

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18. "For good and bad, being relative terms, do not denote anything in the nature of the thing, but on in the relation it bears to another, in its aptness and tendency to produce in it pleasure or pain", Lord Peter King. The Life and Letters of John Locke, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1830, 1972 reprint), pp.310.

19. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. C.B.Macpherson (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968), pp.160-161.

that,

> The ethics of the schools, built on the authority of Aristotle...deal more with hard words and useless distinctions, telling us what he or they are pleased to call virtue or vices, [but] teach us nothing of morality.[20]

Moral theory is no longer orientated to the educative formation of character. Rather, it becomes a calculative rationality geared to preserve and promote the life, health, and property of individuals contracted together in society. There are at best certain procedural norms which facilitate "their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby".[21] These procedural norms and strategies provide men and women with a way "of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of Warre, which is necessarily consequent (as hath been shown) to the naturall Passions of men".[22] However, there exists no meaningful path integral to human perfection which substantiates fundamental moral and religious values in personal and communal life.

As the concept of moral excellence is dismantled so too is the teleological concept of the "good" or ideal

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[20]. King, Lord Peter, The Life and Letters of John Locke (1830, 1972), pp.310.

[21]. Hobbes, Leviathan, pp.223.

[22]. ibid., pp.223.

polity. The real tests for political institutions are functional and utilitarian, namely their capacity to promote tangible interests such as the preservation of life, health, property, trade, civil peace and order.[23]

In seventeenth-century ecclesiology similar moves would be made. The concepts of spiritual virtue, holiness, or sainthood were dismissed as meaningful standards for the evaluation of ecclesiastical institutions. Ecclesiology abandoned the traditional focus on the theological notes of the true church ("the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church"). Institutional structures could not carry such value laden content. The dominance of Latitudinarian theory in England during this period meant that the church was stripped of any distinctively theological status and relegated to the more mundane world of social and political utility. The effectiveness of church institutions in promoting social and political goods was the key standard of evaluation. Distinctly theological standards of evaluation (e.g. the notes of the church)

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23. John Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and James Tully, A Discourse on Property: John Locke and his Adversies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) do argue that there is a limited theory of the public good in Locke's political thought which is focussed on the preservation of life and the industrious transformation of nature.

were displaced or reinterpreted in such a way that they were subordinate to and supportive of the more visible utilitarian goals.

2. A Secularized Natural Law Theory:

Natural jurisprudence theories entailed a significant revision of traditional natural law theory. The concept of "rights" was central to this aspect of the jurisprudence argument. The jurisprudence tradition shifted the focus of political theory from the Aristotelian concern for virtue to a concern for ius or "right". Right was no longer defined as the character of an action when in accordance with divine and natural law. Rather it was re-defined as quality which one possesses, something which individuals have by nature.[24] It now defined an area of individual liberty rather than obligation.[25]

Jurisprudence political thought promoted a secularization of natural rights and natural law

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24. Knud Haakonssen, "Hugo Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.239-265, esp.pp.240-247.

25. See Richard Tuck's discussion of the distinction between right and law in Hobbes's political thought, Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development, pp.120.

theory.[26] Natural laws and natural rights are determined by an analysis of man-as-he-is and society-as-it-is. In Grotius famous etiamsi daremus passage he states that the laws of nature still hold even if we dare presuppose the non-existence of God. Here Grotius severs the close connection of natural law theory from its grounding in traditional theology and teleology.[27] There is no need to pursue a vision of excellence (man-

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[26]. Heinrich A. Rommen, The Natural Law: A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy, (St.Louis: Herder, 1974), ch.4; Knud Haakonssen, "Hugo Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.247-253.

[27]. Contemporary Catholic scholarship tends to trace this theoretical shift to Suarez rather than Grotius. John Finnis and Germain Grisez argue that post-Suarez scholastic natural law theory diverged fundamentally from classical Thomistic theory. According to Grisez, Suarez's argument that the principles of morality are an extrapolation based on a rational analysis of human nature as it is (moral action is action in agreement with human nature) generated a minimalistic ethic that bore little resemblance to Aquinas's understanding of moral action as the agreement of action with a moral end or "good" identified by "practical reason". A well-known presentation of this interpretation is found in Grisez's contribution to the 1960s Catholic debate over contraception: "Three Theories of Moral Law" in Contraception and the Natural Law, (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1964). A more substantive account of the differences between Suarezian and Thomistic natural law theory is provided in Grisez's "The First Principle of Practical Reason", in Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by Anthony Kenny, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), pp.340-382. John Finnis highlights the contributions of Gabriel Vasquez and Francisco de Vitoria in this redirection of scholastic natural law theory in the Catholic tradition, Natural Law and Natural Rights, pp.43-47, 54-57, 348-50.

as-he-should-be) or a summum bonum in order to fully understand the natural order of political community and moral obligations within that community. The whole dimension of political authority, institutions, and obligations, whether civil or ecclesiastical, can be understood as a purely natural or secular phenomenon - a function of human needs and human interests.

The jurisprudence theory of natural rights led to a form of possessive individualism. Rights were the power to keep others off those things which are one's own (one's suum). Natural rights focussed on that which one possessed - one's life, liberty, body, and dominium (property and contractual relationships).[28]

Such a theory of natural rights significantly altered the content of public morality. Within natural jurisprudence the essential requirements of moral action in the public realm are reduced to a bare minimum: protection of one's own rights and non-infringment on the rights of others. The cultivation of virtue and pursuit of fundamental moral or religious goods are bracketed out from the realm of legal and political

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28. K. Haakonseen, "Hugo Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.240-241.

rights and duties.[29] Public institutions are downgeared to serve more mundane interests such as public order and protection of property and liberal procedural values such as tolerance and pluralism.

For the natural jurisprudence tradition the public actor in the civil or ecclesiastical community is not primarily a moral agent engaged in a shared journey for the cultivation of the good society, but a "proprietor" of rights who strives to maximize his interests while respecting the contractual game rules which ensure civil order and the protection of life, personal freedom, and property. Political life is shifted from a concern with shared values to a concern for the promotion of individual interests.

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[29]. Liberal jurisprudence is not univocal on this point. There was a significant group of theorists who tried to accommodate the Aristotelian concern for the place of virtue in the public realm with modern rights theories. According to MacIntyre the stress on the links between the ethics of virtue and legal rights and duties is found in English jurists such as Cumberland, Scottish jurists and moral philosophers such as Stair, Carmichael, Hutcheson, and Ferguson, and Pufendorf in Germany. However, these syntheses were challenged: in England by Locke, in Scotland by Hume and Smith, and in Germany by Thomasius. MacIntyre argues that this attempted rescue of Aristotelian ethics was short-lived due to its failure to provide a rational justification of those fundamental moral values (e.g. charity, humility, courage, fidelity, temperance) which transcend the minimalistic ethic of natural rights jurisprudence. Alasdair MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?, chs.12-16; see also Knud Haakonssen, "Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.253-261.

This shift was complemented by the strong utilitarian bent of the liberal concept of the state. Political consensus was achieved through the maximal satisfaction of individual interests rather than the achievement of a convergence on substantive moral or religious values. The political climate in a liberal state is "de-moralized". A classic text articulating this devaluation of the political is found in Locke:

> The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving, and advancing their own civil interests. Civil interests I call life, liberty, health, and indolency of the body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like...the whole jurisdiction of the magistrate reaches only to these civil concernments;...and all civil power, right and dominion is bounded and confined to only the care of promoting these things.[30]

The power of the liberal platform in the modern world lies in this functionalization of political life. The rise of capitalism called forth a political instrument attuned to its interests and wary about wrong-headed ethical and religious concerns interfering with the economic pursuits of society. The bottom-line of the liberal state was the enforced prohibition against any disruptions of "political economy" on moral or religious grounds. Addressing the question of the validity of

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[30]. John Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), pp.17.

religious claims in the sphere of political economy Locke states that,

> Nobody, therefore, in fine, neither single persons, nor churches, nay, nor even commonwealths, have any just title to invade the civil rights and worldly goods of each other upon pretense of religion.[31]

Given this concept of possessive natural rights one might expect, as Hobbes proposes, that a natural state of mutual alienation, competition, and struggle exists between individuals preserving and promoting their interests. Hobbes argued that the only escape from this "war of all against all" is the "sovereignty" of nation state. Sovereignty is not a natural power but contractually instituted for the sake of the achievement of public order and peace. However, it is absolute. Sovereignty is the power to override the natural rights of individuals in order to achieve public order.[32] Mutual tolerance, respect, and civility, must be enforced by the strong hand of the state (whether a democratic, aristocratic, monarchic, or mixed form of government).

The overriding concern for this school of thought is the establishment of basic minimalistic, but universal, principles which underlie a peaceful sociable

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31. ibid., pp.27.

32. Knud Haakonssen, "Hugo Grotius and the History of Political Thought", pp.244-247.

civil society. It is this "self-interest" in self-preservation which establishes the foundational principle for natural law. Pufendorf states that,

> It is an easy Matter to discover the Foundation of Natural Law. Man is an Animal extremely desirous of his own Preservation, of himself expos'd to amny Wants, unable to secure his own Safety and Maintenance, without the Assistance of his Fellows, and capable of returning the Kindness by the Futherance of mutual Good: But he is often malicious, insolent, and easily provok'd, and as powerful in effecting Mischief, as he is ready in designing it. Now that such a Creature may be preserv'd and supported, and may enjoy the good Things attending his Condition of Life, it is necessary that he be social; that is, that he unite himself to those of his own Species, and in such a Manner regulate his Behaviour towards them, as they may have no fair Reason to do him Harm, but rather incline to promote his Interests, and to secure his Rights and Concerns. This then will appear a [recte, the?] fundamental Law of Nature, Every Man ought, as far as in him lies, to promote and preserve a peaceful Sociableness with others.[33]

Both civil and religious society must be ordered to this basic requirement of natural law.

3. Tolerance, Comprehension, and the Church:

The disruption of political order due to the impact of strong independent ecclesiastical communities was an area of particular concern for seventeenth-century jurisprudence theory. Accordingly, the problems

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[33]. Samuel Pufendorf, The Law of Nature and Nations, trans. Basil Kennet (London,1749), pp.134. This passage was quoted from Richard Tuck, "The "modern" Theory of Natural Law", in Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe, pp.105.

surrounding the political management of religion (the nature of tolerance, comprehension, church-state relations) proved to be a marked feature of the natural jurisprudence approach to ecclesiastical issues. However, there is a need to specify the precise way in which these issues are defined by the jurisprudence tradition. The need for conceptual clarity is due to the fact that norms such as tolerance and pluralism can be defended in diverse ways by diverse modes of argument. Indeed, these values are largely empty of real significance until they are situated in a specific line of argument. The liberal concept of tolerance is rooted in a particular conceptual grid which significantly determines the character of the norms it promotes. Futhermore, there are alternative traditions of discourse diverging from the natural jurisprudence yet promoting tolerance and pluralism as key norms.

Arguments promoting various modes of religious and ethical tolerance and pluralism can be classified into three types. Each type is capable of generating a wide variety of options. First, there is a pluralism of complementarity. In this case ethical and religious pluralism is conceived of as the expression of diversity within unity. Pluralism fleshes out a diverse range of values and practices which complement and actually

reinforce a common moral or religious vision. The pluralism of institutional practices and public norms converges in a coherent ethos and life style. This convergence may be generated from above (an authoritarian mode of communication) or from below (a free mode of communication). However, common to all options within this type is the notion that pluralism is only viable when it expresses a public consensus on hierarchy of substantive moral and religious values.

A second form of public tolerance and pluralism is a "conflictual" type. Like the complementarity model it contends that fundamental moral and religious values must be given a place within the public forum. However, it also recognizes that the diversity of values may be incommensurable. The diversity does not express a common moral and religious vision but rather a variety of fundamentally divergent options.

A classic example of opposing claims of complementarity and conflictual models can be found in the debate between Gladstone and Newman on ramifications of the doctrine of infallibility for the participation of Roman Catholics in English political life.[34] Gladstone argued that the doctrine of an independent

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[34]. John Henry Newman, Newman and Gladstone: The Vatican Decrees, ed.A.Ryan, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962).

infallible religious authority undermines the critical function of the sovereign public realm in forging an authoritative consensus for society.

Newman recognized that the doctrine of infallibility leads to the conclusion that there are two strong institutional communities (church and state) capable of promoting conflicting moral and religious visions as well as developing institutions to embody and express those visions. Alternate visions were not just "paper churches". These visions were given concrete embodiment in strong resilient institutional communities. Newman had little doubt that the authoritative claims and actions of an independent religious communities would create real difficulties for any political community. Any possibility for a common public ethos was dissolved into a federalism of divergent moral communities. The sovereign public authority of the modern nation state could be challenged by the sovereign moral authority of the church. However, for Newman this situation of countervailing moral, religious, and political authorities created a situation in which a freedom for real choice was

ensured.[35]

A third approach to the question of tolerance is generated by the argument that fundamental moral and religious values are radically private options incapable of being properly expressed by public institutions and practices. Herein lies the specifically liberal jurisprudence argument. It is predicated upon two contentions.

First, there is an enforced privatization and atomization of fundamental moral and religious values. Substantive moral and religious values are seen to be the inviolable property of private persons. They are not, indeed, they cannot be, subject to any form of political control or political manipulation. Locke argues that in matters of ultimate concern (faith and morals) "every man...has the supreme and absolute

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35. Newman's challenge to the modern doctrine of state sovereignty was developed by a number of major English political theorists in the early twentieth century: H.J.Laski, Authority in the Modern State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919) and Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917). In the latter study Laski explores the contributions of Newman to a revised theory of the nature of political pluralism. J.N.Figgis is notable for his contributions to this school of thought: Churches in the Modern State, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913) and Political Thought From Gerson to Grotius (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960). The school of early twentieth century English pluralism is surveyed by H.M.Magid in English Political Pluralism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941).

authority of judging for himself".[36] Society is geared to the provision of those "primary goods" which facilitate the actualization of one's "life plan".[37] However, at no point should public authorities attempt to direct or intervene in this realm:

> Men enter into society with one another, that by mutual assistance and joint force they may secure unto each other their properties, in the things that contribute to comfort and happiness in this life, leaving in the meanwhile to every man the care of his own eternal happiness, the attainment whereof can neither be facilitated by another man's industry, nor the loss of it turn to another man's prejudice, nor the hope of it be forced from him by an external violence.[38]

Concrete institutional dynamics of ecclesial or political life are irrelevant to personal religious salvation. The realm of fundamental moral and religious value is private and interior.

Beneath this tolerant respect for the personal journey lies a somewhat negative view of public discourse and action. The public institutional world is the realm of power, contract, rule, and order, the realm of procedural laws and strategies, the realm geared to

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36. A Letter Concerning Toleration, pp.47.

37. See John Rawls's restatement of this Lockean theme in A Theory of Justice. For Rawls the political community should provide the "primary goods" necessary for the pursuit of a person's "life plan" but it should not attempt to define that life plan (pp.90f, 407-416)

38. A Letter Concerning Toleration, pp.47.

the pursuit of primary goods (life, liberty, property). It is not the place where substantive moral and religious values can be embodied or pursued. Locke states that,

> the business of laws is not to provide for the truth of opinion, but for the safety and security of the commonwealth, and of every particular man's goods and person. And so it ought to be. For the truth certainly would do well enough if she were once left to shift for herself.[39]

Locke argues that there is no rational way of securing public consent on religious opinions. Concepts of religious doctrine together with their correlative concepts of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" simply reflect diverse subjective claims that cannot be resolved in any meaningful way:

> For every church is orthodox to itself; to others, erroneous or heretical. For whatsoever any church believes it believes to be true; and the contrary unto those things it pronounces to be error. So that the controversy between these churches about the truth of their doctrines or the purity of their worship is on both sides equal; nor is there any judge, either at Constantinople or elsewhere upon earth, by whose sentence it can be determined.[40]

Since public doctrines and institutions are not essential to one's moral and religious journey, therefore they are relegated to the realm of "things indifferent". The concept of "things indifferent" was

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39. ibid., pp.45.

40. ibid., pp.26.

critical for theorists in the natural jurisprudence tradition. This concept applied to anything that lay outside of the inviolable realm of private subjective belief and commitment. Interiority is the realm of fundamental values and religious life. Providing objective standards for this realm of interiority is difficult. In the religious realm Locke argues that only real test for orthodoxy is "inward sincerity".[41] Elmer Gantryism, deceit, and insincerity, not heresy, is the classic religious vice for liberalism.

This distinction between interiority and exteriority, subjective beliefs and public expression, is critical to the jurisprudence approach to toleration. As soon as "conscience" begins to "break out into action, either of the tongue, or other part of the body" it moves from the inviolable realm of privacy into the realm of "things indifferent", the realm of law and political control.[42] Conscience is "in its own nature invisible, and consequently exempted from all human

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[41]. ibid., pp.18; R.Kraynack, "John Locke: From Absolutism to Toleration", American Political Science Review, 74(1980), pp.65.

[42]. Thomas Hobbes, De Corpore Politico, The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, vol.4 (Aelen: Scientia, 1840, 1966 reprint), pp.172.

jurisdiction".[43] When moral or religious values are drawn into the world of political discourse and deeds they loose their critical moral and religious significance. Elements of ecclesial life such as tradition, worship, discipline, institutional order, and doctrine - which were normally seen to be intrinsic to meaningful spiritual life - are now seen to be part of the religiously indifferent world of political power and influence. Locke states that,

> For however much some people boast of the antiquity of places and names, or of the splendour of their ritual; others of the reformation of their teaching [disciplinae]; and all of the orthodoxy of their faith (for everyone is orthodox to himself): these claims and others of this kinds, are more likely to be signs of men striving for power and empire over one another than signs of the church of Christ.[44]

As the criterion for personal orthodoxy is reduced to one test, that of inward sincerity, so the marks of the church (apostolicity, holiness, catholicity, and unity) are reduced to one mark, that of mutual

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43. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. M.Oakeshott, (Oxford: B.Blackwell, 1946), pp.343. In placing "things indifferent" (religious doctrine and ecclesiastical order) under the political management of the state Hobbes could claim that he was not violating the fundamental tenet of liberty of conscience which was essentially private and "invisible" to public scrutiny and control.

44. John Locke, Epistola de Tolerantia, A Letter on Toleration, (Latin and English Text), ed. and trans. by Raymond Klibansky and J.W.Gough, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp.59.

toleration - "the chief distinguishing mark of the true church".[45]

We begin to see that the jurisprudence argument for toleration is linked to a considerable disenchantment with traditional ecclesial experience. Religion should be "private and retiring". It should not disturb the mundane pursuits of civil society. The jurisprudence tradition in social theory cast a jaundiced eye at all forms of moral or religious "enthusiasm". Enthusiasm was the zealous allegiance to, and public agitation for, a moral or religious vision of the "good". Enthusiasts insist on promoting their subjective religious claims in the public realm. Since there is no rational way of weighing competing claims and securing public agreement therefore the public forum is drawn into an irresolvable conflict. Jurisprudence theorists argued that religious controversy was a major cause of civil disorder. The attempt to impose a religious or moral vision was seen as a product of insidious manipulation or delusion.[46] If a tolerant public order was to be

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[45]. ibid., pp.59.

[46]. Eldon Eisenach notes that there is a hidden "intolerance" in the liberal concept of tolerance: "Locke's view of human nature reveals this same combination of wideness and narrowness. Whenever men are thought to be thoroughly anchored to the pursuit of "conveniences" in this world, their inner lives are thought to be safe from harmful consequences; these men

achieved the disruptive influence of moral and religious enthusiasm had to be controlled. In effect this meant that the power and influence of the Christian churches on the public realm had to be strictly curtailed or regulated.

A. The Erastian Response

How was this to be achieved? One of the striking characteristic traits of liberals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the strong Erastian bent of their church-state theories.[47] The liberal argument began as a plea for an enlightened despotism over the church.

Though there are many antecedents to this tradition, formally, Erastianism arose during the 1560's with the work of Erastus (1542-1583), the Reformed theologian whose name became equated with this

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are "free", rational, and industrious. when, however, men's external actions are thought to flow directly from this inner freedom and therefore cannot be traced to the lawful pursuit of material happiness, these men are often pictured as either under the insidious power of other men or in the helpless grip of "the ungrounded fancies of (their own minds)". Such men are not truly "free" but they are dangerous and require both the disciplining of law and a restructuring of their own faith". The Two Worlds of Liberalism: Religion and Politics in Hobbes, Locke, and Mill, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp.83.

47. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.4, esp. pp.265-329.

political-ecclesiastical option. It initially emerged as an internal debate in the Reformed tradition. In Explicatio Gravissimae Quaestionis Erastus had challenged the jure divino concepts of church order in both orthodox Calvinism and Catholicism.[48] He argued that the debate over such doctrinal concepts of the church only served to intensify religious conflict and civil disorder. However, a strict separation of church and state would not alleviate the problem. Given the disruptive impact of public religious controversy Erastian theorists concluded that toleration could not be achieved through the free interplay of intolerant warring sects. The only solution to religious strife was the imposition of religious tolerance and comprehensiveness through the instrumentality of the state. The state would be used to choke out the flames of religious zeal and enforce a tempered liberal order for religious life.[49] For theorists such as Grotius and Hobbes the advantage of this strategy was its apparent theologically neutral and non-controversial character. Since religious controversy was being

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48. John Neville Figgis, "Erastianism", in A Dictionary of English Church History, eds. S.L.Ollard and Gordon Cross, (London: A.R.Mowbray and Co., 1912), pp.206-207.

49. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.465-466.

managed according to non-religious juridical criteria (e.g. securing civil peace) this ensured some kind of public objectivity that could not be attained through theological debate.[50]

Within a relatively short period of time England and Holland became the major centers for the development of this Erastian ideology.[51] In Holland the early seventeenth-century liberal Arminian movement was closely associated with Erastianism. One of most prominent figures in the Dutch Arminianism, Hugo Grotius, outlined an Erastian position in his work, De Imperio Summarum Potestum Apud Sacra (1614).[52] Erastianism became one of the dominant theories and strategies for church-state relations in seventeenth-

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50. See Richard Tuck's remarks in his essay "Skepticism and Toleration in the Seventeenth Century", in Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.32-33.

51. It is probable that the publication of Erastus' writings in England (1589) received official approval and recognition from the Privy Council. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.455. L.Sturzo provides a brief analysis of analogous developments in the Catholic tradition during the 17th and 18th centuries under the classification "jurisdictionalism". Jurisdictionalism included a number of diverse ecclesiological movements such as Gallicanism and Febronianism. These movements argued for strong institutional control of the Roman Church by nation state. Church and State (London: The Centenary Press, 1939, pp.321-341.

52. J.N.Figgis, "Erastianism", pp.207.

century English thought.[53] It was the favoured position for many of the major political theorists and ecclesiologists of the age. Political theorists such as Francis Bacon, John Hayward, Henry Parker, William Prynne, John Selden, Sir Edward Coke, James Harrington, Thomas Hobbes, and the early Locke, as well as ecclesiologists such as Stillingfleet and Tillotson, embraced Erastianism. John Allen points out that the House of Parliament during the 1640's was "thoroughly Erastian".[54] John Selden, a brilliant lawyer, led an influential group of lay liberals and moderates in the House of Commons who were committed to a thoroughly Erastian view of the Church.[55] Clarendon noted that

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53. J.W.Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1660 (London: Methuen, 1938), pp.339-345, 426-448; W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.121-129, 453-491; vol.3, pp.44-95, 270-271; vol.4; pp.265-329. Jordan speaks of "the triumph of Erastianism in England" during the 17th century (pp.265). Jordan's extensive study of the topic is by no means an uncritical chronicle of the progress of truth in the triumph of religious toleration. In fact, he points out that this revolutionary redirection of Christian thought and practice was not without its dark side since it usually entailed a significant extension of political power over the ecclesial realm.

54. J.W.Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1660, pp.345.

55. Selden was one of the most brilliant legal theorists of the 17th century. He exemplified the deeply anti-clerical bent of lay liberal opinion. In his major historical study, Historie of Tithes (1618), he used his fine critical skills to disprove the traditional thesis of the primitive apostolic origin of

most lawyers found themselves in the Erastian camp. Their strategy, he argued, was to "whet and sharpen the edge of the law to wound the Church in its jurisdiction, and at last to cut it up by the roots, and demolish its foundation".[56]

Thus, the radically Erastian views of Thomas Hobbes were not particularly atypical in mid-seventeenth-century English political thought.[57] Henry Parker (1604-1652) presented a most vigorous defense of

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clerical financial claims. Selden hoped to undermine the legitimacy of ecclesiastical financial power as well as its doctrinal and institutional powers. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.479-488; Gerald R.Cragg, Freedom and Authority: A Study of English Thought in the Early 17th Century, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), pp.270-277.

[56]. Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, IV, pp.38, quoted from W.K Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.4. pp.267. Jordan tends to sympathize with Clarendon's judgment. He points out that there was in theory and in practice an attempt to destroy the strength and integrity of ecclesiastical institutions and open the door to the modern state to occupy the resulting vacuum of power. Jordan raises the question of whether the dismantling of ecclesiastical power and the emerging power of the modern sovereign state really contributed to the cause of religious freedom (pp.268-9).

[57]. In "The Ideological Context of Hobbes's Political Thought" Quentin Skinner has provided a cogent critique of a popular misinterpretation of Hobbes as isolated thinker marginal to the mainstream of 17th century political thought, Historical Journal, 9 (1966), pp.286-317.

Erastian theory during the English civil war.[58] His work focusses on three critical elements: the problem of religious zealotry, the question of the sovereignty, and the relation between commerce and religion.

Parker expressed the strong anticlerical sympathies of the House of Parliament in the early 1640's. Parker looked suspiciously upon all expressions of religious enthusiasm or zeal. For Parker religious zealotry would include mainstream Roman Catholicism and Presbyterianism. In effect, all forms of religious belief which diverged from the moderate liberal Latitudinarian position were tainted with the disorder of zealotry and enthusiasm. Parker painted a dark picture of the intentions and goals of religious zealots. He believed that they wished to arrogate public power to themselves and to impose a totalitarian religious system on society. Religious enthusiasm was the most serious threat to a vibrant liberal public

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58. Henry Parker (1604-1652), The Trojan horse of the presbyteriall government unbowelled (London: 1646); The true grounds of ecclesiasticall regiment (London: 1641); The question concerning the divine right of episcopate truly stated (London: 1641); Of a free trade. A discourse seriously recommending to our nation the wonderfull benefits of trade, (London: 1648); M.A. Judson, "Henry Parker and the theory of Parliamentary Sovereignty", in Essays in History and Political Theory in Honor of Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge Mass.: 1936); Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.4, pp.269-276.

order.[59]

In order to undermine the public impact of religious zealotry Erastian theory argued for strict control of its institutional ecclesiastical power. Apart from the more general question of the biblical mandate for or divine character of structures of church government Erastians also tackled more specific symbols of ecclesiastical power. One issue that received significant attention was the question of the status of the clerical state. John Selden and Parker saw a link between religious zealotry and clericalism. Accordingly, they insisted that the clergy have no "indelible character" distinct from that of the laity. Ordination should not be seen as a sacred act conferring a unique spiritual status, rather, it should be treated as a civic act which falls under the sovereign authority of the state.[60]

For Parker any demand for an autonomous independent church, whether episcopal or presbyterial, amounted toan attack upon the sovereignty of the nation state.[61]

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59. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.4, pp.271-272.

60. J.W.Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1660, pp.342.

61. ibid., pp.347-348. George Digby argued that the establishment of presbyterial government would effectively entail setting up "a Pope in every parish".

Thus, following this logic, Parker condemned all divino jure theories of church government as "seditious". For Parker the ultimate authority in matters of public church doctrine, worship, and government rests with "common consent" as expressed in the voice of the public political assembly, the Parliament.[62] He rejects the possibility that there are any ordained ecclesial or political institutions. Civil and ecclesiastical institutions are simply the products of pacts and agreements by the people who are the "true efficient cause of power".[63]

Finally, Parker argued that by devitalizing religion and by constructing a moderate liberal established Church under the control of the laity through the power of the state one will achieve a "new reformation" which will have very practical social and economic benefits. Liberal religion will promote the goals of a commercial society. Its distaste for religious enthusiasm and controversy will allow the energies of the society to be geared to more mundane and productive activities. Its lack of doctrinal rigorism

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Parker also rejected the presbyterial option, The Trojan horse of presbyteriall Government Unbowelled, (London, 1646, pp.16, 21-22; see Jordan, pp.270).

62. ibid., pp.344.

63. ibid., pp.427-428.

will allow for a more flexible and pragmatic approach to the tasks of international trade and colonialism.[64]

One of the most tough-minded Erastian arguments for the need to compel moderation and tolerance was presented by William Prynne. Prynne argued for internal transformation of ecclesial life as well as external control by the state. His account of the dynamics operative between church and state is built upon a profoundly negative evaluation of the impact of religious zeal in the public realm. For Prynne the establishment of a liberal and tolerant religious public discourse is based upon a deliberate iron-fisted repression of all movements which promote various forms of doctrinalism and divine right theories of the church.[65] He feared the advent of complete political anarchy resulting from the religious conflicts of the 1640's and 50's. Accordingly he advocated the most urgent, direct, and brutal means to attain the goal of a more undogmatic, tolerant, and moderate style of ecclesial life. Prynne may have erred in the strategies that he proposed for the accomplishment of these ends. However, despite the questionable nature of his proposed

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64. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.4, pp.275-276.

65. ibid., vol.4, pp.276-281.

strategies he did highlight two critical elements involved in the establishment of a tolerant liberal order.

First, the lay secular authority (the state) needed to be the real source of authority in the public realm. It needed to be freed from clerical influence, power, or control. Prynne felt that Erastian control of the church by the state was the only way to put the reigns on ecclesiastical interference in the public realm.

Secondly, Prynne realized that there was a need to cut deeper. The external control over ecclesiastical power needed to be complemented by an internal transformation of ecclesial life. He argued that all the major patterns of ecclesial life (Papalism, Episcopalism, Presbyterianism, Independency) failed to promote tolerance and moderation. The state needed to actively promote, or, more correctly, to impose, a new style and order on ecclesial life itself. The theoretical guidelines for this internal transformation of ecclesial life, the formation of an ecclesial order based on the norms of natural jurisprudence, would be spelled out more clearly in the work of Latitudinarian ecclesiologists such as Stillingfleet.

B. The Lockean Strategy

Immense support was given to Erastian strategies within the natural jurisprudence tradition. However, there was one important dissenting voice - John Locke. Locke, as we know, rejected the Erastian approach and advocated a strict separation of Church and state. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century the liberal tradition has insisted that there is an essential connection between toleration and the separation of church and state. Accordingly, the strong Erastian bent of liberal theory throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been down-played. Locke is presumed to have demolished the foundations of the Erastian argument. How radical was Locke's revision of the jurisprudence tradition and how significant was the impact of his contribution?

Recently discovered manuscripts have forced a significant re-evaluation of Locke's position in this argument.[66] In two early political tracts addressed to a Puritan divine, Edward Bagshaw, we find Locke unequivocally restating the classic Erastian position on

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66. John Locke, Two Tracts on Government, ed.by Philip Abrams, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Robert P. Kraynak, "John Locke: From Absolutism to Toleration", American Political Science Review, 74(1980), pp.53-69.

the question of tolerance.[67] What is remarkable is that the Erastian argument found in these tracts appeals to the same basic principles as his later argument for a separation of Church and state.[68] In both cases the critical problem is the emergence of civil disorder and war due to the disruptive presence of religious controversy. Both texts argue that public expressions of fundamental moral and religious options were "things indifferent" to one's personal journey of faith. Both allow for an uncritical tolerance of any sincerely chosen option as long as it remains at the level of "privacy". Both look to political strategies for minimizing the impact of moral and religious concerns in the public realm while maximizing the dominance of utilitarian concerns.

Why, then, the shift? The first reason is the argument that the strategy of Erastianism will not be effective. Locke admits that the political authorities have an inherent right to manage ecclesial institutions

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67. Locke, Two Tracts on Government

68. This argument is presented in his tract on toleration; Epistola de Tolerantia, A Letter on Toleration, ed. and trans. by Raymond Klibansky and J.W.Gough. See Kraynak's discussion in "John Locke: From Absolutism to Toleration". Richard Tuck also underlines the fact that these two arguments rest on "the same foundations", "Skepticism and Toleration in the Seventeenth Century", pp.34.

and public religious doctrine. However, the political management of such affairs ("things indifferent") may not be conducive to the civil peace and prosperity of liberal societies. Locke presents the reason for this anomaly in his Letter on Toleration:

> But perhaps it may be concluded from hence that I deny unto the magistrate all manner of power about indifferent things, which if it be not granted, the whole subject matter of lawmaking is taken away. No, I readily grant that indifferent things, and perhaps none but such, are subjected to the legislative power. But it does not therefore follow that the magistrate may ordain whatsoever he pleases concerning anything that is indifferent. The public good is the rule and measure of all lawmaking. If a thing be not useful to the commonwealth, though it be never so indifferent, it may not presently be established by law.[69]

Locke contends that the Erastian strategy is a legitimate option, however it may not be an effective one. Robert Kraynak unravels Locke's political analysis of this issue.[70] Locke argues that while the concept of "things indifferent" is correct, nevertheless the fact is that it is usually rejected by precisely those religious elements in society who are capable of being most disruptive. Religious believers are often irrationally attached to external rites and doctrines. Thus the political management of these indifferent

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69. A Letter Concerning Toleration, pp.36.

70. See his article, "John Locke: From Absolutism to Toleration", pp.53-69.

externals is perceived (albeit wrongly) to be a threat to the inviolable core of religious faith. This being so then the Erastian control of religion will inevitably meet opposition by some form of misplaced religious zealotry. Given the presence of these disordered forms of religious faith, Erastianism will have the unintended consequence of aggravating and prolonging, rather than controlling, disruptive religious controversy. Accordingly, Locke proposes that a strict separation of Church and State may be a more effective solution to the problem.[71]

However, there is a second important element in Locke's argument which Kraynak fails to illuminate. Natural jurisprudence theorists argued that unrestricted tolerance should be given to those areas which were intrinsically private. Thus, even Hobbes argues for a type of tolerance. He contends that the state should tolerate the diverse "private opinions" of its citizens. The privatization of moral and religious values was the prerequisite for their entrance into the realm of unrestricted tolerance. However, Hobbes maintained that

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71. This argument for toleration on the basis of prudential assessment of the negative political consequences of policies of religious persecution is explored by Susan Mendus in "Locke and the Case for Rationality", Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism, (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1989), pp.22-43.

"things indifferent", ecclesial institutions and doctrines, were intrinsically public, and, therefore, must be subject to political control.

Locke challenged this last contention. He argued that not only religious opinions but also ecclesial institutions, worship, and doctrines could be de-publicized and privatized. First, he argues that there are no substantial shared public goods that are dealt with in ecclesial communities. The forms and structures of ecclesial life reflect clusters of private religious opinions. Because of this dependence on the shadowy realm of personal religious opinion religious communities lack a substantial public force:

> In civil society one man's good is involved and complicated with another's, but in religious societies every man's concerns are separate, and one man's transgressions hurt not another any further than he imitates him, and if he errs, he errs at his own private cost.[72]

In the spectrum of diverse religious communities the spectrum of arbitrary private religious opinion is simply writ large:

> What I say concerning the mutual toleration of private persons differing from one another in religion, I understand also of particular churches which stand, as it were, in the same relation to each other as private persons among themselves.[73]

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72. Quoted from The Life and Letters of John Locke, by Lord Peter King, pp.303.

73. A Letter Concerning Toleration, pp.24.

Locke privatizes religious community. He sees it as part of the private baggage of private persons, irrelevant to the public utilitarian concerns of political society. He argues that the ecclesial realities are not only "things indifferent" they are also "wholly independent from every man's concern in civil society."[74] Churches are relegated to the realm of privacy and forbidden from invading the realm of public discourse and action:

> The church itself is a thing absolutely separate and distinct from the commonwealth. The boundaries on both sides are fixed and immovable. He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things most remote and opposite, who mixes these two societies, which are in their original, end, business, and in everything perfectly distinct and infinitely different from each other.[75]

With this enforced separation of the church from the political realm a new form of tolerance is achieved. However, it is purchased at the price of a complete elimination of the public presence and force of ecclesial life, a complete secularization of political life, and a restriction of political discourse and action to purely utilitarian ends. As Kraynak points out this Lockean theory of tolerance is not altogether

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74. Quoted from The Life and Letters of John Locke, pp.288.

75. A Letter Concerning Toleration, pp.27.

innocent. It is based on an "ultimate uniformity of opinion" that is born out in the practice of contemporary liberal societies. The pursuit of substantive moral and religious ends in the public realm is firmly discouraged. Ecclesial commitments and practice are tolerated if they are "private and retiring" and do not disturb public order or impinge upon the lives of others.[76]

Locke developed rather than jettisoned the jurisprudence approach to the question of the church and its relation to the state. He expanded its political-ecclesiastical options. The Erastian strategy called for the imposition of a comprehensive but arbitrary uniformity over ecclesial doctrine and practice. Locke's strategy called for a radical privatization of ecclesial life. The former called for a political determination of things indifferent, the latter a de-politicization of things indifferent.

Locke's revision was built upon two important assumptions. First, it was predicated on the possibility of a successful marginalization, rather than political control, of ecclesial life from politics. The churches must be kept far from the centers of public

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76. R.Kraynak, "John Locke: From Absolutism to Toleration", pp.68.

discourse and action and restricted to the shadowy realm of subjective preference and private opinion. Secondly, it presumed that the state can be fully secularized while still generating sufficient grounds for political obligation without the support of a civil religion.

Both of these assumptions were challenged and widely repudiated by seventeenth and eighteenth-century liberals. In fact, until the latter part of the nineteenth century Locke's ecclesiastical proposals were largely ignored by the tradition of religious liberalism.[77] In the early nineteenth century they do surface in the work of the Manchester school of liberalism.

Conclusion

The natural jurisprudence tradition represented a major paradigm of thought in seventeenth and eighteenth-century liberalism. An examination of ecclesiological debates in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth

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77. For critiques of the popular myth of Locke's dominance over 18th and 19th century liberal thought see John Dunn, "The Politics of Locke in England and America in the 18th Century" in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives, ed. John W.Yolton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); J.G.A.Pocock, "The Myth of John Locke and the Obsession with Liberalism", in John Locke, ed. Richard Ashcraft and J.Pocock (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980); Quentin Skinner, "History and Ideology in the English Revolution", Historical Journal, 9 (1965).

centuries reveals the decisive impact of the jurisprudence paradigm. The theorists of the jurisprudence tradition had a great deal to say about the nature of the church and its relationship to the state. Their work was complemented by a group of theologians who attempted to provide new ecclesiological paradigms based upon the insights of the jurisprudence tradition. This tradition of English religious liberalism traces its roots to the Tew School (Falkland, Chillingworth, Hales, etc.). By the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it developed into a major tradition (Latitudinarianism) which dominated ecclesiological reflection in England. Latitudinarianism became the ecclesiological trajectory of the English natural jurisprudence tradition.[78]

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78. This discussion might lead to the presumption that the natural jurisprudence tradition when translated into ecclesiology inescapably leads to conclusions which are only compatible with a "Latitudinarian" or moderate style of ecclesiology. However, outside of England the jurisprudence tradition influenced non-liberal ecclesiological discourse. Catholic neo-scholasticism traced its roots to jurisprudence theorists such as Suarez. The ecclesiological discourse evolved by neo-scholasticsm was heavily dependent on jurisprudential political thought. However, neo-scholastic jurisprudence argued for a hierachical papal church with infallible teaching authority. Yves Congar complains that this development represents a deflection of Catholic ecclesiology from its authentic theological focus. That may be so. Nevertheless, it does illustrate the fact that the natural jurisprudence tradition has had a more pervasive impact on Enlightenment ecclesiological debates than the specific line of development explored in this thesis.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM IN ENGLAND

1. Arminianism: Doctrine and the Church

English religious liberalism traces its roots to the Arminian controversy at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[1] The rise of Arminianism in Holland was a development of decisive significance for English theological debates.[2] This Dutch-English theological connection was expressed in the flurry of translations, correspondence, academic citings of Dutch authorities that marks the English theological scene during this period. The academic spokesmen of Dutch Arminianism such as Arminius, Episcopius, and especially

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[1]. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.319ff.

[2]. Nicholas Tyacke contends that scholarship has largely ignored the revolutionary impact of Arminianism on 17th century English religious thought, "Puritanism, Arminianism, and Counter Revolution" in C.Russell, ed., The Origins of the English Civil War (London: MacMillan, 1973); Geoffrey Nuttall, "The Influence of Arminianism in England", in Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, ed. G.O. McCulloh, (New York: Abingdon, 1962), pp.46-63; R.L. Colie, Light and Enlightenment: A Study of the Cambridge Platonists and the Dutch Arminians, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1957); John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2 and 4. For an overview of the Arminian movement see G.L.Curtiss, Arminianism in History (Cincinnati: Cranston & Curts, 1894) and A.H.W. Harrison's studies, The Beginnings of Arminianism to the synod of Dort, (London: University of London Press, 1926) and Arminianism (London: Duckworth, 1937).

Grotius were received as major theological authorities in the English-speaking world.[3]

Arminius (1560-1609) was a Dutch theologian who was educated at the Geneva Academy and influenced by Theodore de Beze and the Ramists.[4] Formally the Arminian controversy focussed on the doctrine of predestination. Arminius was critical of the narrow rigidity of the Calvinist orthodoxy. He argued that doctrinal positions should be "revisable and reformable".[5] In particular he focussed on the need for more latitude in the interpretation of Calvin's theology of predestination. Arminius wanted a doctrinal revision which would provide a more comprehensive position acceptable to all major Protestant denominations.

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3. As early as 1605 Arminius's views were being cited by anti-Calvinists in Cambridge, N.Tyacke, "Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution", pp.130-131.

4. James Arminius, The Writings of James Arminius, trans. J.Nichols and W.R.Bagnall, 3 vols., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956); Gerrit Jan Hoenderdaal, "The Life and Struggle of Arminius in the Dutch Republic", in Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, pp.12-13. James Luther Adams points to the influence of Erasmus on Arminius spiritual and intellectual formation, in "Arminius and the Structure of Society", Man's Faith and Freedom, pp.91.

5. Gerrit Jan Hoenderdaal, "The Life and Struggle of Arminius in the Dutch Republic", in Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, pp.15.

To a large extent this doctrinal controversy was, as Jordan points out, only a test case for what was essentially an ecclesiological debate.[6] The real issue was the question of ecclesiastical toleration. Doctrinal certitude was part of the cement of the strong and resilient Reformed Church that had been developed in the sixteenth century. Loosening the bonds of doctrinal orthodoxy would entail a significant reconstruction of the ecclesiastical life of the Reformed Church.[7] Ongoing revision and reform should be a feature of both the doctrinal and ecclesiastical dimension of the church:

> Is it not useful, for the purpose of bearing testimony to the power and the liberty of the church, occasionally to make some change in the laws ecclesiastical, lest the observance of them becoming perpetual, and without any change, should produce an opinion of the (absolute) necessity of their being observed.[8]

In grappling with the problem of tough, doctrinally rigorous, Dutch Reformed ecclesiastical authorities

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6. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.324. However, the critique of the doctrine of predestination and the greater stress given to the role of human freedom and self-determination were, of course, critical features in the development of religious liberalism.

7. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.324-325.

8. James Luther Adams "Arminius and the Structure of Society, Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, pp.96.

Arminius proposed a strategy that was both theological and practical. In the theological arena Arminianism challenged the hegemony of the "puritan" trajectory within Calvinist Protestantism. While tackling specific theological issues such as predestination, nevertheless it recognized the interminable character of such debates. Accordingly, the Arminian school shifted its focus to an assault on the whole concept of authoritative doctrinal certitude. It was a daring and largely successful manoeuver. Liberal Arminianism focussed the debate on a foundational issue which could undermine the whole thrust of the puritan Calvinism without having to plow through each complex doctrinal issue.

The reasons for the effectiveness of this strategy were twofold. First, if Calvinist divines begged the important questions being raised about this problematic then their credibility would be gradually eroded. The process of the marginalization of fundamentalist and fideist traditions from the intellectual mainstream was a result of the success of this liberal attack. Schools of fundamentalist thought literally withdrew from the debate and set up their own intellectual establishments based upon an unreasoned assertion of doctrinal certitudes. On the other hand, if they

attempted to engage in the debate they would find their hands tied since their normal strategy of appealing to some authoritative doctrinal position would be invalid. They would be forced into the strange theological world of constructing an argument for doctrinal certitude that was not based on an appeal to any authoritative biblical doctrine. In short, liberal Arminianism appeared to have caught the Achilles' heal of doctrinal fundamentalism in modern theology.

However, there was also a recognition that theological success needed to be matched by inroads into institutional strength and influence of the Calvinist churches. In a decisive move Grotius argued that the sheer fact of major doctrinal debate entails that doctrine serves as a poor basis for ecclesial unity. Grotius turns to his own jurisprudence theory as the key to accurate understanding of the nature of the church. The church, he argued, should be "founded in reason" rather than doctrine, "as rational and consonant to the law of nature as possible", so that "it will be applicable and comprehensive to all reasonable men".[9]

This de-doctrinalization of the Church must express itself in the practical life of the Church. Grotius

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[9]. Hugo Grotius, A Defense of Christian Religion, (London, 1678), p.3.

argues for the formation of a comprehensive established church. This church will entrench doctrinal pluralism and latitude.

> There is nothing conduceth more to unity and peace then by taking off and reducing the general factions of religion, which is done by enlarging the bosom of the Church and taking off of things that are cavilled at.[10] ...For true balance of the Church Government, is to have as few unnecessary obligations as possible, and to be free from all cloggs in oppression of reason or conscience, but giving latitude, be *comprehensive of the generality* as much as may be.[11]

In attempting to break the doctrinal spine of the Reformed Church, Arminianism looked to the authority of the modern nation state. The strength and independence of the Reformed Church would be tamed by the liberalizing hand of the state. The state would impose a system of comprehension which would define and insist upon a significant degree of doctrinal latitude for ecclesiastical life.[12]

Hugo Grotius and Johannes Althusius, both major figures in seventeenth-century political theory, developed this position in the Dutch debates. They argued that the State must be equipped to ensure

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10. ibid. pp.4-5.

11. ibid. pp.5.

12. James Luther Adams, "Arminius and the Structure of Society, Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, pp.99-100.

ecclesiastical peace. Accordingly, the state must be capable of exercising a real control over the life of the Church in order to restrain the disruptive impact of religious controversy over questions of church doctrine or discipline.[13] For Althusius, as for all Erastians, "moderation" was the key to any successful implementation of their ecclesiastical strategy. The attempt to politically impose any rigid doctrinal orthodoxy would encourage religious controversy and sabotage the whole Erastian effort to diffuse the disruptive impact of religion in the public sphere.[14] Therefore the established church must offer a doctrinal position that is general and "comprehensive".

Arminianism attempted to offer an effective theological and political strategy for an assault on Calvinist fundamentalism. Across the channel England had seen the rise of a very strong Puritan tradition during the Elizabethan era. It was not surprising that

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13. Johannes Althusius, Politics trans. by F.S.Carney, pref.C.J.Friedrich, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); J.N.Figgis, Political Thought From Gerson to Grotius (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960) ch.VII.

14. Given the complex ecclesiastical and political divisions of the Dutch community, the liberal wing, led by Uyttenbogaert and Althusius, advocated an Erastian federalism in which each province would be given complete control over their ecclesiastical institutions. (W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, pp.333).

a number of English religious thinkers stood up and took notice of developments and debates in Holland.

2. Early English Religious Liberalism and the Problem of the Church

The Tew Circle is often seen as the embryo of theological liberalism in England.[15] It drew together a number of major voices of the early seventeenth-century liberal tradition (Lord Falkland (1610-1643), William Chillingworth (1602-1644), John Hales (1584-1656). All of these figures were personally connected and committed to the theological struggles of the Arminian school in Holland.[16]

These men were leaders of the liberal forces in England during the civil war. While they sided with the royalist cause and defended the traditional episcopal order against the Puritan assault, nevertheless, they had no basic sympathy with Laudian ecclesiological "pretensions" which stressed the jure divino character

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15. Gerald R.Cragg, Freedom and Authority: A Study of English Thought in the Early Seventeenth Century, ch. 9.

16. Hales was present at the proceedings of the controversial Synod of Dort (1618-19) in Holland which debated the theology of Arminius and the Remonstrants.

of the episcopacy.

Much of the ecclesiological debate of the civil war centered on the issue of "right doctrine". Programs of ecclesial reform could only be justified by appeals to "right doctrine.[17] Falkland argued that dogmatic (jure divino) ecclesiologies proposed by both the Anglo-Catholics and Puritans could never provide a basis for ecclesiastical settlement and civil peace.[18] In the first place, he maintained that the insistence on dogmatic "uniformity" leads to a "destruction of unity".[19] Dogmatic ecclesiologies create ecclesial divisiveness. Secondly, dogmatic ecclesiologies create strong and "independent" structures of ecclesial authority that impinge upon the rights and freedoms of individuals.[20] Third, Falkland is skeptical about the epistemological status of dogma in general. There are no clear publically available rational grounds for a dogmatic stance in ecclesiology. Dogmatic positions are

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17. Winthrop Hudson and Leonard Trinterud, Theology in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971) pp.31.

18. see Paul Avis's discussion in Anglicanism and the Christian Church, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), pp.99.

19. John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century vol.1, pp.155-156.

20. ibid. pp.156-157.

ineluctably circular and self-serving.[21] Thus, while dogmas may be suitable in the realm of individual belief, they cannot be appealed to as a meaningful justification for a public institutional order like the church.[22]

Falkland's approach to dogma had the effect of undercutting the traditional premise that questions concerning ecclesial order had to be resolved on the basis of an appeal to doctrine. Falkland argued that the order of church government could be more meaningfully defended on the grounds of prudence and natural law than those of doctrine.[23] Thus he concurred with Grotius' argument that there was need for a significant shift of ecclesiology from the discipline of theology to that of jurisprudence.

It was on these grounds that he came to the defense of the episcopal order. He contended that the episcopacy was an integral part of an established and healthy constitutional order. He saw the possibility of significant ecclesiastical reforms, however he maintained that the abolition of the episcopacy would

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21. ibid. pp.157-160.

22. ibid. pp.162.

23. ibid. pp.154-155.

not serve public interests.[24] The episcopacy could and should be justified on political and historical grounds but not on dogmatic theological grounds. Falkland believed that such grounds were more objective and non-controversial than the theological arguments put forward by Presbyterians and Laudians. Of course, his position caused considerable controversy.

In effect, the Falkland's liberal defense of episcopal order undermined its theological significance. Rank, order, status, in the ecclesia was purely a function of human prudence and historical circumstance. In his controversial tract on Schism (1642) Hales adopts a similar line of argument:

> They do but abuse themselves and others that would persuade us that bishops by Christ's institution have any superiority over other men further than of reverence, or that any bishop is superior to another further than positive order as agreed upon amongst Christians hath prescribed. For we have believed them that hath told us "that in Jesus Christ there is neither high nor low, and that in giving honour every man should be ready to prefer another before himself" (Rom.12:10); which saying shuts off all claim most certainly to superiority by title of Christianity...Nature and religion agree in that neither of them hath a hand in this heraldry of secundum sub et supra; all this comes from composition and agreement of men among themselves.[25]

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[24]. ibid. pp.156.

[25]. quoted from John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, vol.1, p.231. Tulloch states the fundamental principle of Latitudinarian ecclesiology was that

In this debate over the episcopacy liberals stressed the very human and historical character of Church institutions and structures. However, in recognizing the impact of history they did not accept the orthodox "appeal to antiquity" or tradition as an authoritative basis for insisting on a particular doctrine or institutional pattern.[26]

The historical appeal to a primitive tradition was a major argument in seventeenth-century apologetics.[27] The argument from antiquity was so central to apologetical debates that Melchior Cano could write that "Theologians not expert in church history do not deserve the name of theologians".[28] However, their historical research was based on a somewhat a-historical

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"rational expediency in matters of Church government is the only law, and the highest law we can have." (vol.1, p.57)

26. J.W.Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1660, pp.236.

27. See Chadwick's discussion in From Bossuet to Newman: The Idea of Doctrinal Development, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), esp.ch.1. An analogous line of argument was developed in political theory. J.A.G.Pocock has described it as the "ancient constitutionalist" paradigm, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957)

28. Quoted from Owen Chadwick, From Bossuet to Newman, pp.5.

assumption, namely that a pristine tradition could be identified which was transmitted without variation down through the centuries. This tradition would be normative and authoritative source for the determination of ecclesial doctrines and institutions.

Religious liberals and latitudinarians were interested in historical research insofar as it undermined rather than reinforced this appeal to a primitive history as an authoritative source for ecclesiology. To this extent they attempted to highlight the more radical implications of the historical research of the ancient constitutionalist debates in political theory and in patristics. Liberal Anglicans drew on the more skeptical conclusions put forward by historians such as the Protestant patristic scholar Jean Daille. Daille initially attempted to defend the continuity of Protestantism with the primitive patristic tradition. He remained confident of the success of his attack on Catholic claims, but he became increasingly disenchanted with the possibility of any serious defense of Protestant claims. He noted that the most successful historical arguments of seventeenth-century apologetics, such as Bossuet's devastating History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches, were those which debunked an antagonist's claim that his

particular confession embodied some immutable tradition. In De Usu Patrum he concluded that all apologetic appeals to a pristine patristic tradition proved to be indefensible in the light of rigorous historical research. Religious liberals and Latitudinarians leaned heavily on Daille's study to argue that historical research could not reveal immutable authoritative doctrines or ecclesial structures.[29] "Antiquity" could not serve as an authoritative ground for the validation of dogma.[30]

If history could not validate ecclesial doctrine what about the traditional argument from the sacred scriptures? From the beginning religious liberalism demonstrated a strong interest in biblical theology. The interest was due in part to a recognition that the manifest theological pluralism and non-doctrinal pastoral bent of the biblical texts could fit with the agenda of religious liberalism. Even Newman would find himself in agreement with this liberal insight. He argued that on the basis of scripture alone it is difficult to establish and publically secure any firm

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29. ibid., pp.16.

30. Paul Avis, Anglicanism and the Christian Church, pp.106-7.

dogmatic principles.[31]

Chillingworth and Hales stressed the critical role of biblical theology for resolving conflicts over Christian doctrine. In the face of Protestant doctrinal disputes he underlined the fact that scripture is "the only rule whereby to judge of controversies". This rule implied considerable latitude since "nothing is necessary to be believed but what is plainly revealed".[32] Chillingworth contended that attempts to put forward strong doctrinal positions could not be justified on the basis of any reasonable exegesis of the biblical tradition. Post-biblical doctrinal developments were being read into the scriptures and new non-biblical rules of faith were being imposed. He attacked his fellow Protestant divines for this vice. Newman, quoting Chillingworth, concurred with his

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31. See Newman's argument in "Apostolic Tradition", Essays Critical and Historical, (London: Longmans and Green, 1901), vol.1.

32. Quoted from J.W.Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1660, pp.243. Newman saw a basic line of continuity between liberal Latitudinarianism and the Protestant insistence on the sole authority of scripture and the right of private interpretation: "the right which each man has of judging for himself ipso facto deprives him of the right of judging for other inquirers. He is bound to tolerate all other creeds by virtue of the very principle on which he claims to choose his own. Thus ultra-Protestantism infallibly leads to Latitudinarianism." Newman, "Apostolic Tradition", Essays Critical and Historical, vol.1, pp.104.

critique of the failure of Protestantism to follow the logic of its own principles. The passage quoted by Newman is taken from Chillingworth's Religion of the Protestants:

> This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the general words of God...this deifying of our own interpretations and tyrannous enforcing them on others - this restraining of the Word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein Christ and the Apostles left them - is and hath been the only fountain of all the schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal: the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ.[33]

Chillingworth wanted to firmly knock this extra-biblical doctrinal baggage out of biblical interpretation. He would clean the doctrinal fat from Christian discourse by insisting on two rules of thumb for interpretation: first, the importance of dispassionate scholarly exegesis of the biblical texts and, secondly, that the real intent of biblical narratives is the pastoral application of this material to one's personal moral and religious life rather than the intellectual grasp of a system of doctrine. Such a strategy would

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[33]. Quoted in J.H.Newman, Essays Critical and Historical, vol.1, pp.113. Newman adds quotes from a line of liberal and Latitudinarian theorists such as Locke, Hoadley, and Hampden. See Chillingworth's discussion in The Religion of Protestants, Works (London: Oxford University Press, 1838), ed. Birch, vol.1, Part I, ch.2.

have the effect of considerably discouraging, if not eliminating, the quest for authoritative religious doctrines in Scripture.[34]

To underline the fact that a strong doctrinal emphasis seriously distorts the Christian message Chillingworth argued that there is no necessary connection between doctrinal profession and salvation. In raising the question "whether both catholics and protestants can be saved in their several professions" Chillingworth concludes that exclusivist ecclesiocentric approaches to salvation are misguided.[35] The focus on a "true church" is the product of an "ungrounded false hope of salvation in different faiths and religions...The truth is...that generally both catholics and protestants may be saved".[36] Chillingworth argued that the divisive character of exclusivistic approaches to salvation was linked to a doctrinalism which insisted on the pivotal role of

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34. William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants, Works, vol.1, ch.2. Despite Chillingworth's stress on the authority of scripture, nevertheless, he is careful to point out that scripture is not the "object of our faith" but the "instrument of it" (pp.183-184). Faith is more than mere apprehension of doctrines.

35. ibid. pp.70.

36. ibid. pp.71-72.

a particular system of belief.[37]

If this critique holds then the whole question of heresy and orthodoxy fades in significance. For the Tew School, as for the Gallicans in France, "schism" not heresy, was defined as the fundamental religious problem of the day. Given their approach to doctrine heresy would be seen as a very rare phenomenon. However, schism, the disruption of ecclesiastical tranquility and unity over issues that are relatively indifferent was seen as a fundamental violation of the Biblical imperative to love and unity.

Toleration replaces doctrine as the key component in forging a unified ecclesial order. Chillingworth argues that religious tolerance is an intellectual fulfillment of the Christian love commandment.[38] Doctrinal diversity is an ineluctable dimension of religious life. There is little hope of terminating religious dissent in this earthly existence. Chillingworth argues for a strategy that respects this

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37. W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.2, 382.

38. William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants, Works, vol.1, pp.156ff. This is a persistent theme in the tradition of religious liberalism. Key texts exploring the question of toleration in Hales' writings are: Of Dealing With Erring Christians (1641), The Tract Concerning Schism (1642), Of Enquiry and Private Judgement (1619).

pluralistic dimension of religious life. He argues that it is "best to content ourselves with, and to persuade others unto, a unity of charity, and mutual toleration; seeing God hath authorized no man to force all men to unity of opinion."[39] Similarly, Hales argues that theological or doctrinal differences do not constitute a basis for ecclesial conflict and should not break up the unity of common faith and worship.[40]

> I do not see that men of different opinions in Christian religion may not hold communion in sacris and both go to one church.[41]

Chillingworth argues that what seems to be an accommodation to the limitations of human existence, is, in fact, a virtue. Toleration makes a virtue of necessity. The absence of infallible doctrinal authority is a blessing since toleration is the only real context for the pursuit of truth by free rational human beings.[42]

An interesting test-case of the range of doctrinal

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39. William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants, Works, vol.1, pp.260-261.

40. John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, vol.1, p.223-224.

41. Tract concerning Schism, quoted in J.W.Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1660, pp.238.

42. William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants, Works, vol.2, pp.37, 63.

tolerance advocated by English religious liberals is found in their attitude to the Arian heresy of the fourth century. Religious liberalism seldom saw any great problem with Arianism. Hales argued against the Athanasian attempt to develop doctrine beyond scriptural revelation on the fragile basis of tradition or church authority.[43] Arianism, he argues, was ejected for a "matter of opinion".[44] Chillingworth argued that "the doctrine of Arius is either a truth, or at least no damnable heresy".[45] He argued that the pre-Nicean Church was "very Arian" in its approach to the Christ question.[46] The Athanasian component of the Thirty-Nine Articles was one of the main reasons for his refusal to subscribe to the articles.

> the daming sentences in St.Athanasius's Creed (as we are made to subscribe to it) are most false, and also in a high degree presumptuous and schismatical. And therefore I can neither subscribe, that these things are agreeable to the word of God, seeing I believe they are certainly repugnant to it.[47]

Newman's important contributions in this area of

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43. John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, vol.1, p.227.

44. ibid., vol.1, p.228-229.

45. William Chillingworth, Works, vol.1, pp.12.

46. ibid., pp.11.

47. ibid., pp.16.

patristics need to be read in the light of his overall debate with the tradition of religious liberalism on the question of the nature of doctrine.[48]

By attacking the concept of doctrine and insisting on a biblically based minimum of credal tenets liberalism had radically undermined traditional concepts of heresy and orthodoxy. The history of Christian debate was re-read through bifocal lenses which targeted narrow and divisive forms of Christianity consisting of schismatics, fundamentalists, and enthusiasts on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a Christianity of breadth and comprehensiveness consisting of men of moderation, tolerance, reason, and prudence. With this new perspective liberal sympathies were drawn to Arius in the Arian-Athanasian conflict. The research and writing by Newman on fourth century Christianity was directed towards a defense of Athanasian Christianity. In challenging the liberal bias towards Arius he also had to take issue with basic features of the interpretive paradigm of liberal historiography. Finally, liberal sympathies with a classic theorist of a heterodox

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48. J.H.Newman, Arians of the Fourth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1897), his studies and translations of Athanasius, Select Treatises of St.Athanasius, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1900), and significant sections of his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.

Christology gives evidence of the fact that this emerging tradition was moving into tension with a fairly broad stream of Christian orthodoxy. Religious liberals from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries have called for a "new Reformation". In the light of the radicalness of the liberal challenge, even the classical Protestant Reformation begins to look more like another wave of medievalism rather than a real contribution to modernity.[49]

The emerging tradition of religious liberalism called for a revolutionary transformation of the classical streams of sixteenth-century Reformation thought. It represented a major third wave of theological reflection quite distinct from Protestant and Catholic orthodoxies.[50] It took aim at elements which were central to the classical Protestant

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[49]. The classic twentieth century statement of this thesis is found in the work of Ernst Troeltsch, Renaissance und Reformation, Gesammelte Schriften, IV, (Tubingen, 1925), pp.261-296; English translation "Renaissance and Reformation" in The Reformation: Material or Spiritual?, ed.by Lewis W.Spitz, (Boston: D.C.Heath and Co., 1962) pp.17-27.

[50]. Thus when the historians of religious liberalism look back for precursors of their tradition they ineluctably point to figures such as Erasmus who were anathematized by both classical Protestant and Catholic orthodoxy. A Roman Catholic scholar Friedrich Heer presents this thesis of the "third force" in his book Die Dritte Kraft (Frankfurt au Main: M.Fischer, 1959). See his comments on the critical importance of the Arminian movement (pp.577).

traditions as well as Roman Catholicism. Sixteenth-century debates focussed on the interpretation of particular doctrines; now the concept of doctrine itself was being challenged. Sixteenth-century debates focussed on the question of what particular theological model of ecclesiastical authority was binding. Now the very notion of a set of normative binding ecclesial institutions based on authoritative tradition or scripture was being questioned.

This new tradition of thought inaugurated a major period of theological reconstruction. Its questions and critiques dominated English theological debate in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. During this period prominent clerics in the Anglican church, Edward Stillingfleet, John Tillotson, Benjamin Hoadly, William Warburton, and William Paley, worked out the implications of this tradition for Anglican ecclesiology and Anglican ecclesiastical practice.

CHAPTER IV

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LATITUDINARIAN ECCLESIOLOGY

1. The Triumph of Latitudinarian Liberalism:

Mainline interpretations of seventeenth-century religious controversy tended to concentrate on the debates between the Laudian defenders of episcopacy and proponents of Presbyterianism.[1] The Restoration has generally been interpreted as the victory of Laud's High Church party. There are a number of reasons for this interpretation. In the first place, the Restoration was marked by a reassertion of episcopal order, and, secondly, it was accompanied by a systematic political repression of Puritanism.[2] These strategies would seem to fit a Laudian agenda.

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[1]. Norman Sykes, Old Priest and New Presbyter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934) ch.1; W.A.Shaw, A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth, 2 vols., (London: Longmans Green, 1900); R.S.Bosher, The Making of the Restoration Settlement: the Influence of the Laudians: 1649-1662, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1951).

[2]. The religious legislation of parliament during the Restoration was directed against the Puritan forces: the act of Uniformity disenfranchised Puritan ministers; the Conventicle Act (1664) forbade assembly for worship outside of the established Church; the Five Mile Act prohibited ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity from coming within five miles of the parish they had previously served; the New Conventicle Act (1670), passed against the known wishes of the King, allowed Justices of the Peace to judge without jury those accused of meeting illegally and impose stiff fines or prison terms.

However, the interpretation of the Restoration as a re-establishment of Laudian policy has been subject to serious criticism in contemporary scholarship.[3] In the first place, Laudian strategy was theocratic. It promoted a divine right theory of the episcopacy and monarchy. Such an approach entailed a repression of the power of the laity in Parliament. However, in the Restoration the Parliament took the lead in the determination of ecclesiastical policy. Cross writes,

> An Anglican Church, seemingly more exclusive than ever before, came back in 1662, but on terms under which Parliament kept the ultimate control, as its subsequent actions clearly demonstrated.[4]

It was the religious liberals who stressed the critical role of the laity in the determination of ecclesiastical policy, not the Laudians. Parliament was the most effective instrument for establishing firm lay control over the Church.

Secondly, there was an attempt to forge some kind of workable accommodation between Laudian forces in the monarchy and moderate Puritans such as Richard Baxter

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[3]. Claire Cross, Church and People 1450-1660, The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church, (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press Limited, 1976); I.M.Green, The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[4]. Claire Cross, Church and People 1450-1660, The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church, p.222.

and Reynolds. The work of reconciliation showed promise in the early 1660s. However, the accommodation reached at the Savoy Conference was rejected by the Cavalier Parliament. I.M.Green points out that it was the lay gentry in the Cavalier Parliament who were the main opponents of the attempt by the monarchy to forge a working relation between high church and the presbyterian factions. The gentry insisted on the persecution of presbyterianism and the establishment of their own particular approach to episcopal government. The restoration in the end largely reflected their political and ecclesial agenda.[5] David Edwards writes that,

> If Laudianism is to be understood as an attempt to reaffirm the power of the clergy, we must say that the Restoration was by no means a Laudian triumph. On the contrary it can be better understood as the climax of a process continuous since the 1530s: the triumph of the laity.[6]

The Latitudinarian Erastian policies of the lay gentry were designed to strike out against the source of Puritan strength at the local parochial level. Between 1660 and 1662 some seventeen hundred and sixty

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[5]. I.M.Green, The Re-establishment of the Church of England 1660-1663, see ch.9.

[6]. David L. Edwards, Christian England, vol.2, (London: Collins, 1983), pp.311. See Claire Cross's study, Church and People, 1450-1660: the Triumph of the Laity, (London, 1976).

ministers had to leave their parishes due to their Puritan convictions.[7] The real force of clerical influence in the Puritan tradition was felt at the local rather than the national level. Unlike the High Church Laudians, Puritans did not have a clear sense of the nature of church order at the national level (though they did support a close church-state relation). Their vision of church was parochial and the primary focus for the exercise of ecclesial power was at the local level. Richard Baxter described the church in this way:

> A particular church of Christ's institution by his apostles is a sacred society consisting of one or more pastors and a capable number of Christian neighbours consociate by Christ's appointment and their own consent for personal communion in God's public worship and holy living.[8]

The parochial congregation was the key element in the Puritan vision of ecclesia and key to the parish was the systematic discipline exercised by the pastor over faith and morals in the local community. Puritans nurtured a strong sense of the essential disciplines for holiness in personal living, family life, and the work place. The parochial bit of Puritan pastoral control and discipline was felt much more acutely by the laity than the

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7. David Edwards, Christian England, vol.2, pp.312-313.

8. Quoted from David Edwards, Christian England, vol. 2, pp.316-317.

national control once exercised by the high church Laudian party. Accordingly, the anger of the Cavalier House of Commons was focussed on the Puritan clergy. A series of draconic measures were adopted to undermine the presence and influence of the Puritan clergy at the parochial level.

But the Restoration also re-established episcopal order in the Church. The first outspoken requests for a return of the old form of episcopacy came from the gentry.[9] However, the thrust of the Parliamentary measures were really to undermine the authority and influence of the Puritan movement rather than to build up the Anglican Church.[10] Little efforts were made in terms of rebuilding Anglican episcopal power. The gentry wanted political stability. The Cavalier support for the episcopacy was an attempt to undermine the disruptive public presence of religion on the political process and bring English religion under the firm

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9. I.M. Green, The Re-establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663, pp.9-10.

10. Claire Cross writes that "the members of the Cavalier Parliament had no intention of restoring to the Church in 1662 the legislative, economic or, above all, the political powers which it had possessed under Laud. The propertied classes indeed wished to re-establish the alliance between parson and squire, but now meant this alliance to be one in which the squire without question had the upper hand." Church and People 1440-1660: The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church, pp.226.

control of the established social and political elites of England. It advocated an episcopalism with a strong Erastian bent. Both High Church theorists as well as Presbyterians were dissatisfied with these strategies.

Green documents some interesting features of the Cavalier approach to the restoration of the episcopate. First, selection of bishops was based on purely pragmatic political grounds. Episcopal selection should be guided by the principle of Latitudinarian comprehension. The bishops were a symbol of ecclesial unity and stability therefore they should represent a wide variety of ecclesial and political viewpoints - Arminians, Calvinists, Low and High Churchmen, staunch Anglicans, Commonwealth supporters, etc. The King wished to be "the prisoner of no one party in the church".[11] Secondly, those selected for episcopal service were elderly and almost universally men of unexceptional talent - men of "reverent mediocrity".[12] Thirdly, there seemed to be a deliberate omission of men associated with the Laudian approach to church state

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[11]. I.M. Green, The Re-establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663, pp.89-90

[12]. ibid., pp.90, 95.

relations.[13] Fourthly, those selected were men marked by their moderation and lack of significant controversy in their careers. Few of them suffered persecution under the commonwealth .[14] In short, Charles selected bishops suited to a Latitudinarian and Erastian policy rather than a strong High Church episcopacy.

Furthermore, in a number of ways the institutional powers of episcopacy were actually curtailed. The courts of the Star Chamber and the High Commission, on which Laud had depended, were suppressed. The bishops had to depend on the "creaking machinery" of diocesan courts.[15] The canons of 1640 were declared illegal. The Convocation was suppressed and the House of Commons claimed the right to handle much of the financial and ecclesiastical business discussed in Convocation. Parliament also claimed authority over decisions regarding doctrine and church government. Cross concludes that,

> Legislatively, juridically, as well as financially, the Restoration Church had been forced to capitulate to the laity in Parliament, a far cry from the Laudian concept of an independent Church

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13. ibid., pp.91.

14. ibid., pp.93-94.

15. David Edwards, Christian England, vol.2, p.311.

ruled by the King in partnership with his bishops.[16]

In short, the restoration represented the triumph of an aggressive lay and liberal Erastianism. This movement was explicitly hostile to clerical claims. It wanted the influence of the Church curtailed, controlled, and brought in line with secular lay interests. The ecclesiologists who best expressed this movement were the Latitudinarians. They were led by their most prominent spokesman Edward Stillingfleet (1635-1699).[17]

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16. Claire Cross, Church and People 1440-1660: The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church, pp.229.

17. Other important Latitudinarian divines in the Restoration Church were John Tillotson (1630-94), Simon Patrick (1635-1707), Edward Fowler (1632-1714), Thomas Tennison (1630-94) Joseph Glanville (1636-80), Gilbert Burnet, and John Wilkins. John Spurr offers a brief discussion of most of these figures in part II of his essay "Latitudinarianism and the Restoration Church", The Historical Journal, 31 (1988), pp.68-77. Often lists of representative Latitudinarian writers are extended to include the Cambridge Platonists. Spurr points out that contemporary observers tended to distinguish this younger group of "latitude-men" from Cambridge Platonists such as Ralph Cudworth, Henry More, and John Smith (pp.68-9).

2. The Ecclesiology of Edward Stillingfleet: A Jurisprudence Theory of the Church

Stillingfleet was one of the leading intellectual spokesmen of Latitudinarianism. He studied under Chillingworth and looked to early liberals of the Tew school as his mentors. Stillingfleet's Irenicum was one of the most significant statements in seventeenth-century Latitudinarian ecclesiology.[18] It presents an ecclesiology forged in the context of a dialogue with some of the most foundational thinkers of seventeenth-century political thought. Leading theorists of the natural jurisprudence tradition such as Grotius, Selden, and Hobbes were major resources for his reconstruction of ecclesiology.[19]

A. The De-Doctrinalization of Ecclesiology

In the subtitle Stillingfleet states that forms of ecclesiastical government will be "discussed and examined according to the principles of the law of nature, the positive laws of God, the practice of the

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[18]. W.Stillingfleet, The Irenicum (1662 ed.), (Philadelphia: Sorin, 1842).

[19]. See John Marshall's informative discussion of Stillingfleet's contribution to Latitudinarian ecclesiology in "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men 1660-1689: Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and Hobbism" Journal of Ecclesiastic History, 36(1985), pp.407-427.

Apostles, and the primitive church, and the judgement of Reformed Churches." Of these five criteria the first proves to be determinative.[20] The three quotations on the title page prepare us for the fact that Stillingfleet wants to draw our attention to the critical significance of tolerance and human prudence in the determination of ecclesial order:

> A quotation from Philippians 4:5: "Let your tolerance be evident to all".

Isaac Casaub's letter to Cardinal Perron:

> "If in order to decide the controversies of the present times, that law which is Divine, should be impartially separated form that which is dogmatic and ecclesiastical, it is evident that contests relative to things essential, would not be ether long or keen, amongst candid and pious men.";

And a quotation from "the excellent H. Grotius" (de.Imper.sum.Potestat.circa.Sacra. cap.II):

> "To preserve the peace of Churches, it is of great consequence accurately to distinguish between those precepts which are Divine, and those which are not."[21]

In these quotations Stillingfleet indicates his intention to effect a major shift of the discipline of ecclesiology from its traditional locus in lex divino and re-ground it in lex humani. Stillingfleet's Irenicum is an attempt to delineate a new and distinctive path in ecclesiology, one which would

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20. W.Stillingfleet, Irenicum, pp.iii.

21. ibid., pp.456-7.

sidestep the irresolvable doctrinal debates between Puritan and High Church ecclesiologies. One of Stillingfleet's basic aims in this thesis is to cut ecclesiology loose from its traditional moorings in theology. He argues that theological debates over the doctrine of the Church only disrupt ecclesial life. The first sentences of the Irenicum inform the reader that the author will not add more fuel to the fire:

> I write not to increase the controversies of the times, not to foment the differences that are among us; the former are by far too many, the other too great already. My only design is to allay the heat, and abate the fury of that ignis sacer, ("holy fire") or erysipelas of contention, which hath risen in the face of our church, by the overflowing of that bilious humour, which yet appears to have too great predominancy in the spirits of men.[22]

Doctrine is essentially the realm of "private opinion".[23] Stillingfleet argues that the realm of private opinion is unstable. There are no rational grounds for publically securing specific religious beliefs.[24] Latitudinarians, such as Stillingfleet, attempted to respond to tradition of skepticism in early

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22. ibid., pp.v.

23. ibid., pp.34.

24. ibid., pp.34.

modern epistemology.[25] They pointed to the radical limitations of human rationality in the area of religious belief. The emphasis on the uncertainty and ambiguity of religious belief led to a critique of the concept of public authoritative doctrine.

The tradition of skepticism also had a moral component. In a recent article Richard Tuck points out that the seventeenth-century argument for toleration on the basis of a stance of epistemological skepticism was linked to an advocacy of a moral stance of ataraxia.[26] Ataraxia defined a certain kind of moral ideal for personal character which emphasized the virtues of imperturbability, detachment, tranquility, and moderation. The pursuit of this ideal entailed the cultivation of a character devoid of passionate moral commitments or strong religious beliefs.

These epistemological and moral considerations had an impact on seventeenth-century ecclesiological

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25. R. Popkin, "The Philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet", Journal of the History of Philosophy, 9(1971), pp.303-319; for a more comprehensive discussion of the tradition of modern skepticism see Popkin's The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); and H.Van Leeuwen, The Problem of Certainty in English Thought 1630-1690, (The Hague: M.Nijhoff, 1963).

26. Richard Tuck, "Skepticism and Toleration in the Seventeenth Century", in S.Mendus (ed.), Justifying Toleration (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.21-35.

reflection. While jurisprudence theorists like Stillingfleet wanted to "transcend" the radically relativizing implications of skepticism and provide minimalistic guidelines which could be universally accepted, nevertheless, their position represented a development which embraced rather than rebutted key principles of the skeptical tradition.[27]

One key conclusion that emerged out of this dialogue was a firm rejection of attempts to construct an ecclesiology on the basis of adherence to a set of specific theological doctrines. This was seen as a hopeless enterprise given the private and pluralistic nature of doctrine. Doctrinally based ecclesiologies offer no universally agreed upon grounds for consensus:

> they yet find that those very grounds which they are most inclinable to build their judgments upon, are either wholly rejected by others as wise and able as themselves, or else, it may be, they erect a far different fabric upon the same foundations.[28]

When ecclesiological discourse is doctrinalized it only serves to generate further doctrinal controversy. Rather than becoming the source of peace and settlement it complicates the situation and plunges the church into

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27. See Richard Tuck's discussion of the jurisprudence response to skepticism in "The "Modern" Theory of Natural Law", pp. 107-118, especially his concluding assessment, pp.117-118.

28. Irenicum, pp.34.

more profound division and strife.[29] Doctrine cannot be a basis for ecclesial peace and unity. The diverse doctrines of Church should be treated as private opinions which are a product of "affection and interest" rather than by "reason and Judgement".[30]

Yet Stillingfleet argues that an unrestricted tolerance of private opinion is not a viable option. Some form of "settlement" must be achieved which is not based on an illusory quest for doctrinal certainty:

> It is no ways consistent with the wisdom of Christ in founding his church, and providing for the peace and settlement of it, to leave it at the mercy of men's private judgments, and apprehensions of things, than which nothing is more uncertain, and thereby make it to depend upon a condition never likely to be attained in this world, which is the agreement and uniformity of men's opinions.[31]

The central question for Stillingfleet is the question of how to construct an ecclesiology which will respect this ineluctable lack of doctrinal uniformity and still provide a solid basis for ecclesiastical unity and order.[32]

To achieve this ecclesial "settlement" of religious conflict Stillingfleet argues that ecclesiology like

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29. ibid., pp.35-6.

30. ibid., pp.36.

31. ibid., pp.34.

32. ibid., pp.35.

political theory must engage in an analysis of the proper modes of "accommodation" or "comprehension" of the intractable diversity and plurality which exists in the human community. He lays out the basic problem in terms of a choice between an ecclesiological methodology which is essentially doctrinal and one which is based on the principles of natural jurisprudence:

> The main subject then of our present debate will be, whether any one particular form of church government be settled upon an unalterable Divine right; by virtue whereof all churches are bound perpetually to observe that individual form: or, whether it be left to the prudence of every particular [national] church to agree upon that form of government which it judgeth most conducible with itself to the end of government, the peace, order, tranquility, and settlement of the church.[33]

Stillingfleet's whole treatise is engaged in a lengthy defense of the second thesis - that ecclesiology is primarily a political question, not a doctrinal one. Stillingfleet proposes a domestication or secularization of ecclesiology. He stresses the primacy of "common sense", human prudence, over doctrinal considerations. Ecclesiological debates are to be resolved by the type of practical reasoning defined by the jurisprudence tradition stemming from Grotius.

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[33]. ibid., pp.36.

B. The Question of "Right":

A central concept in jurisprudence reasoning was the concept of jus or "right". Seventeenth-century ecclesiological controversies focussed on the question of "right". Which order of religious authority is established by Jure Divino - established by divine right? Stillingfleet shifts the whole discussion of right into the natural jurisprudence paradigm. Rights are something which men possess by nature. Right and law are not equivalent. He begins by noting the equivocal nature of the concept of right and the common and mistaken equation of right with a lawful order:

> Right in the general is a relative thing, and the signification and import of it must be taken from the respect it bears to the law which gives it. For although in common acceptation it be often understood to be the same with the law itself, as it is the rule of actions (in which sense jus naturae, gentium, civile, is taken for the several "laws of nature, nations, and particular states"); yet I say jus, and so right is properly something accruing to a person by virtue of that law which is made, and so jus naturae is that right which every man is invested in by the law of nature, which is properly jus personae, and is by some called jus activum, which is defined by Grotius to be "the moral quality of a person sufficient to do, or have any just thing", by Lessius to be "a legitimate power to obtain anything". But the most full description of it is given by Martinus, that "right is that necessity, or rightful power attached to a person to do, omit, or suffer anything."[34]

For Stillingfleet right deals with freedom of action of

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[34]. ibid., pp.36-37.

individuals not the intrinsic sacrality or legality of certain institutions or patterns of authority:

> anything which may be done according to law, that is, done jure, because a man hath right to do it. In order to this we are to observe, that an express positive command is not necessary to make a thing lawful, but a non-prohibition is sufficient for that. For it being the nature of laws to bind up men's rights, what is not forbidden by the law is thereby supposed to be left in men's power still to do.[35]

Stillingfleet radically shifts the jure divino language of ecclesiology. That which is jure divino is not that which is determined by divine "law" but that which is left open to human determination!

> Jus is first that which is justum. Whatever us just, men have a right to do it...According to the sense of jus, those things may be said to be jure divino which are not determined one way or other by any positive law of God, but are left wholly as things lawful to the prudence of men to determine them in a way agreeable to natural light and the general rule of the Word of God.[36]

Ecclesiologically, "right" is the realm of human freedom which exists beyond the binding positive laws established by God. The realm of ecclesiastical freedom expresses itself through the exercise of human prudence and calculation and consensus in the determination of structures of church order.

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[35]. ibid., pp.37.

[36]. quoted from, J. Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, vol.1, p.425-426.

> therefore where there is not a particular command and prohibition, it is in nature and reason supposed that men are left to their natural freedom is plain in positive human laws; wherein men by compact and agreement for their mutual good in societies, were willing to restrain themselves from those things which should prejudice the good of the community; this being the ground of men's first inclosing their rights and common privileges, it must be supposed, that what is not so inclosed, is left common to all as their just right and privilege still. So it is in divine positive laws, God intending to bring some of mankind to happiness, by conditions of his own appointing, hath laid down many positive precepts, binding men to the practice of those things as duties which are commanded by him.[37]

For Stillingfleet these divine positive laws do not constitute a systematic doctrine of the Church but represent very specific "exceptions to the rule" such as the law requiring that the Sabbath be honored. These particular positive commands do not conflict with or override the general dictates of natural law which are more decisive for the determination of the overall structure of ecclesiastical life. Things defined by divine positive law and "not flowing immediately from any dictate of natural law" are left to "equity" and prudence.[38]

Within this highly flexible approach to ecclesiology the only absolute standards are those which

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37. Irenicum, pp.39-40.

38. ibid., pp.40, "particular revelations to dictate the goodness or evil of particular actions, not determined by the laws of nature."

establish the procedural norms for a stable tolerant liberal ecclesial order. Only in this sense Stillingfleet can state that the basic criteria for church government are "immutable":

> the reason of church government is immutable, and holds in all times and places, which is the preservation of the peace and unity of the church.[39]

The immutable feature of church government is identical to that of civil government - the preservation and unity of the community. The particular juridical form to achieve that end is "wholly left to the prudence of those in power".[40] Particular forms "may alter according to the several circumstances of times, and places, and persons, for the more commodious advancing of the main end of government."[41]

This prudential approach to church government, ratio regiminis ecclesiastici, is of divine right since there is no clear-cut divine blueprint in scripture.[42]

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[39]. ibid., pp.41. Almost the same words could be used to describe the positions of Grotius, Hobbes, or Locke on political order.

[40]. ibid., pp.3.

[41]. ibid., pp.42.

[42]. J. Tulloch, Rational Theology, vol.1, p.426. The appeal to a binding biblical ecclesial model must be uncontroversial. Any reasonable doubt about the validity of a proposed blueprint effectively demolishes the appeal. pp.428-429.

This explains "why the church's polity is so little described in the New Testament".[43] The sparsity of ecclesiological information is due to the fact that Christ did not proclaim a specific ecclesial order but left it to the practice and prudence of the emerging church.

After a lengthy survey of the biblical evidence and the historical arguments from "antiquity" Stillingfleet reasserts his conclusion that "no one form [of the church] is determined as necessary for the Church of God in all ages of the world."[44] He draws his argument to a conclusion with a list of authorities who have rejected divine right ecclesiologies and who "have in thesis asserted the mutability of the form of church government".[45]

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43. Irenicum, pp.207.

44. ibid., pp.408.

45. ibid., pp.409. Among others Stillingfleet includes Hooker, Parker, Hales, Chillingworth, Grotius, and Bacon. One of the critical texts that Stillingfleet appealed to was an unpublished manuscript by the theologian of the English Reformation, Archbishop Cranmer. The text is cited by Gilbert Burnet in his History of the Reformation in the Church of England (1679-81) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865) [also found in The Works of Thomas Cranmer, ed.G.Duffield, (Appleford, 1964), "Questions and Answers"]. The text became a subject of considerable controversy in the debates between the Latitudinarian and High Church parties since it implies that Cranmer had strong Erastian views. Political authorities are responsible for the "holle cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the

C. Authority and Dissent

If the concept of divine right and ecclesiology is radically altered, so too is the traditional understanding of the nature of religious authority. Applying jurisprudence arguments Stillingfleet insists that ecclesiastical authority is relegated to the management of "outward acts". It is not responsible for the determination of fundamental moral or religious values:

> nor yet can he force the consciences of men, (the chief seat of religion,) it being both contrary to the nature of religion itself, which is a matter of the greatest freedom and internal liberty, and it being quite out of the reach of the magistrate's laws, which respect only external actions as their proper object; for the obligation of any law can extend no further than the jurisdiction and authority of the legislator, which among men is only to the outward actions.[46]

But this does not mean an uncritical liberty of expressed "opinions" since such opinions are public acts. Since "a liberty of all opinions tends manifestly

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administration of God's word for the cure of the Soul, as concerning the ministration of things [of] Political, and civil Governaunce." [quoted from J.Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude Men", pp.416]. For Stillingfleet the text underlined the faithfulness of Latitudinarianism to the spirit of the English Reformation. This appeal to Cranmer did not go unchallenged. High Church authors such as Henry Lowth and Samuel Parker argued that Latitudinarian historiography was slanted. Lowth raised serious doubts about the authenticity of the work. [see Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.415]

46. Irenicum, pp.69.

to the subverting [of] a nation's peace", therefore some control must be exercised over the expression of religious opinions.[47] Like Grotius and Hobbes, Stillingfleet drew a firm distinction between the "right to act" and "liberty of conscience".[48] Political authority is authority over external actions (including speech) not over internal realities (private opinions and beliefs). Authority is not architectonic, imperata facere, but administrative, imperare facienda.[49] Since the nature of Christian liberty is founded upon the freedom of judgement, and not the freedom of practice, therefore the adminstration of such power still preserves the integrity of true religious freedom:

> The radical liberty of the soul is preserved, though it be determined to a particular action...So it is in reference to Christian liberty; though the exercise of it be restrained, yet the liberty remains: because Christian liberty lies in the freedom of judgement".[50]

Thus, even if one is forced to perform an action in word or deed that goes against one's "opinion" the internal realm of freedom is still preserved:

> if it be done with an opinion of the freedom and

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47. ibid., pp.70.

48. see John Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.411.

49. Irenicum, pp.71.

50. ibid., pp.68.

> indifferency of the thing itself, but only with a consequential necessity of doing it, supposing the magistrate's command, he retains the power of his Christian liberty, though under the restraint in the exercise of it.[51]

All of this mirrors Hobbes' position. Not surprisingly High Churchmen such as Simon Lowth lumped Hobbes, Selden and Stillingfleet together in the same camp.[52] To some extent he was correct. However, there were some significant differences. Stillingfleet does distance himself from Hobbes' rigid Erastianism insofar as he argues that the magistrate could not "lawfully forbid the true doctrine to be taught". How can Stillingfleet argue for the incorporation of ecclesial authority into the civil state yet still leave considerable room for free doctrinal debate?[53]

The shift from Hobbes's draconic insistence on "uniformity of doctrine" was effected through the development of the theory of "comprehension". Comprehension entailed a lenient and relaxed public policy approach to doctrinal diversity. Stillingfleet argued that the public impact of doctrinal debate could

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51. ibid., pp.85-86.

52. Simon Lowth was a spokesman for the High Church party. His critiques of Latitudinarian ecclesiology are found in Of the Subject of Church Power, (London:1685), and A Letter to Edward Stillingfleet (London:1687).

53. Irenicum, pp.47-9.

be diffused if the state nurtured a doctrinally lax and comprehensive approach. By admitting a wide latitude in doctrine most reasonable doctrines could be comprehended within an ever expanding range of acceptable "private views" not subject to ecclesiastical censure.

The Latitudinarian position was unique in a number of respects. Comprehension differed significantly from outright toleration. Stillingfleet argued forcefully against the emerging nonconformist arguments for toleration. Toleration would dismember and fragment the Church. Comprehension would provide enough doctrinal latitude that the nonconformists could be accommodated within the established church.

Comprehension also entailed that some forms of religion would be "forbidden"...insofar as these forms tend to "idolatry, sedition, schism."[54] Here we find Latitudinarianism setting out a basic position for seventeenth-century liberal Christianity. There should be no tolerance for the "intolerant". Sects which insist on doctrinal uniformity are to be ruled out from the public realm. They are ruled out on the basis of the fact that they are:

a) Idolatrous: they treat doctrine or ceremonial

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54. Stillingfleet, The Unreasonableness of Separation, pp.132, quoted from Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.420.

forms as absolutes.

b) Seditious: doctrinaire forms of religion will always attempt to capture the public realm and to use it for their own biased ends.

c) Schismatic: their insistence on their doctrinal positions is disruptive of the Christian community, causing factionalism and divisiveness.

The policy of comprehension aimed at entrenching the Latitudinarian approach to doctrine within the church. Comprehension enforced a "uniformity in latitude" that was deeply antithetical to the Puritan and High Church parties. Ecclesial communities which insisted on the classical approach to doctrine (e.g. Presbyterians, Catholics) would not be tolerated.[55] Thus comprehension did not entail the acceptance of all ecclesial communities but the acceptance of all reasonable doctrines within one liberal civil-ecclesiastical polity. In effect, doctrinal "certainty" was declared unconstitutional. The Latitudinarian principle of doctrinal uncertainty would become part of the warp and woof of English ecclesiastical life. Legal developments in the nineteenth century, especially the

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[55]. High Church apologists such as William Sherlock, A Discourse About Church Unity (1681) rejected the Latitudinarian defense of the established church, John Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.419.

Gore case on baptismal regeneration and the rejection of subscription, were seen by the Tractarians as the logical working out of the implications of the Latitudinarian position on doctrine. Church could be established as long as it was doctrinally diffuse. A certain uniformity could be established by diffusing doctrine and thereby deleting it as a matter of significant public concern and debate both in the ecclesial and in the civil polity.

D. Episcopacy

A revealing example of the important implications of this secularized revision of ecclesiology is the Latitudinarian approach to the theory and praxis of the episcopacy in the post-Restoration English Church.

Stillingfleet emerged as a major defender of the episcopal form of government in the Restoration Church. However, he did not follow the High Church line of defense which argued that the episcopacy was founded on some form of a divine right. High Churchmen argued that episcopal authority preserved and proclaimed Christian doctrinal truth. Through its responsibility over "discipline", the episcopacy promoted holiness in the Church. Thus, in the High Church view episcopal authority over sacred doctrine and discipline was an

integral element in the salvific mission of the Church.

Stillingfleet's defense of the episcopacy rested on the novel argument that episcopal order was simply the most convenient and prudent form of ecclesiastical polity given the circumstances, history, and constitution of English political life. He critiqued divine right theories and repudiated the High Church concept of the essential connection of the episcopacy to the salvific mission of the church. Episcopal authority can only be validated on the basis of its political utility rather than its theological character.

On the level of practice this approach redirects the episcopacy away from a concern with the salvific mission of the Church and focusses attention on the importance of its political and social responsibilities. Lacking any strong theological legitimacy the episcopacy now legitimates its existence on the basis of its positive impact on the public policy process.[56]

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56. Claire Cross argues that Latitudinarian theory was reflected in the practice of the Restoration Church; "Bishops indeed regained their seats in the House of Lords in 1661 but were soon made to realize that successive governments expected them to elevate their parliamentary duties above all others. They may have thought of themselves as servants of the Church, but they had to accept being considered the government's servants first. As the number of parliamentary sessions increased in the second half of the 17th century, to become almost annual by 1700, so did the amount of time the government reckoned the bishops should spend away from their dioceses on parliamentary duties in London.

In the Latitudinarian perspective Parliament emerged as the critical focus for the exercise of episcopal influence.[57] For Stillingfleet ecclesiastical authority was to be exercised "by consent" not by "headship". The union of bishops in parliament represented the "common consent of the whole nation". Parliament would be the key vehicle for the representation of English Christianity. The legislative arm of the National Church would be represented by the Parliament.[58]

Both nonconformists and non-jurors rejected Stillingfleet's approach to ecclesial authority. Nonconformists such as Richard Baxter argued that there

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The general disposition of returning churchmen in 1660 seems to have been reactionary and they positively wanted all Church affairs to revert to their 1640 state. Yet even if their attitudes had favoured innovations, there would have been little chance of the Commons permitting them to embark upon the administrative, judicial or financial reforms that the antiquated structure of the Church so urgently needed." Church and People 1440-1660: The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church, pp.226-227.

57. The stress on the critical role of Parliament represents a break with strict Hobbesianism. Hobbes stressed the role of the prince as "rex sacerdos". Hobbes' position continued to receive support in Latitudinarian circles , e.g., Samuel Parker in A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Polity [1670].

58. Stillingfleet, The Unreasonableness of Separation, pp.291, 300-01; see J.Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.420.

was a "true church" and that Stillingfleet's proposals represented the attempt by parliament to usurp the authority of Christ and to create a new church which would be a church constantly re-creating itself in the light of changing historical circumstances.[59] High Church apologists such as William Sherlock argued that neither king nor parliament could legislate for the church but that true episcopal authority rested in the hands of the bishops. However, Latitudinarians such as Matthew Tindal, a disciple of Stillingfleet, argued that the political implications of High Church ecclesiology were not acceptable:

> It soon became an established Principle with the High-Church, that there were two Independent Governments in the same Nation, and that the Government of the Church was by Divine Right in the Bishops.[60]

He applauded Stillingfleet for not setting up "an Empire within an Empire".[61] Episcopal authority must be integrated with and subservient to the authority of the

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59. J.Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.412.

60. Matthew Tindal, The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted, [London:1706], pp.liii. Quoted from J. Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-Men", pp.421.

61. Matthew Tindal, The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted, [London:1706], p.liv. Quoted from J. Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men", pp.421.

national political consensus.

The politicization and secularization of the episcopacy is a concrete expression of the fundamental thrust of Latitudinarian ecclesiology. The de-doctrinalization of ecclesiology would have decisive practical implications. Since church institutions were no longer perceived to be intrinsically orientated to distinctly theological ends such as salvation, reconciliation, or holiness, therefore they were shifted to the pursuit of more mundane and tangible goals.

E. The Dictates of Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence

Having argued both from biblical and rational grounds for the non-theological character of ecclesiology, Stillingfleet offers six "dictates" or principles of natural jurisprudence for the construction of any ecclesial order. It is significant that these principles are universally applicable to any religious community (Muslim, Christian, or Jewish). The dictates are drawn from an analysis of "religious-community-as-it-is" rather than a particular theological vision of religious community. They lay out the basic contours of a Latitudinarian ecclesial order.

The first dictate states that the principles of church polity are to be found in nature not in divine

revelation. All humans by nature form "societies for worship".[62] Thus, the first major dictate of the law of nature regarding the ecclesial question is

> that there be a society and joining together of men for the worship of God...For the dictate of nature being common to all, that God must be served, nature requires some kind of mutual society for the joint performance of their common duties.[63]

Religious community is a foundational and natural human reality extending through all cultures and religions. There are a number of complex functions or dimensions in any natural religious community that need to be dealt with in ecclesiology, such as rites of sacrifice, public festivals, and mysteries.[64] Stillingfleet argues that these patterns of religious community probably predate civil societies.[65]

> so that in the most prodigious idolatry, we have an argument for religion; and in the strange diversities of the ways of worship, we have an evidence how natural a society for worship is. This is to show the validity and force of the argument drawn from the consent of nations, even in their idolatry.[66]

Thus the basic dynamics of ecclesial life can be established by comparative study of the diverse forms of

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62. Irenicum, pp.100.

63. ibid., pp.100.

64. ibid., pp.104ff.

65. ibid., pp.100-101.

66. ibid., pp.104.

religious community in various cultures.

The second dictate establishes that this society be maintained in the most "convenient" or prudential manner.[67] Government in the ecclesia is geared to the "preservation" and "maintenance" of the church. This inevitably involves the establishment of an order of authority and rule:

> To the maintaining of a society, there is requisite a distinction of persons, and a superiority of power and order, in some over the other. If all be rulers, every man is sui juris, and so there can be no society, or each man must have power over the other, and that brings confusion.[68]

The necessity of a "governing power in the church" is an "immutable" feature of all religious communities. The recognition of the need for this political order of authority and rule in the church is not determined "by virtue of God's constitution, but as a necessary result from the dictate of nature, supposing a society".[69] However, the particular structure of authority is, of course, left undetermined.[70]

The third dictate is that communal worship directed to a divine being must be solemn and rational. This

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67. ibid., pp.113.

68. ibid., pp.113.

69. ibid., pp.114.

70. ibid., pp.114.

leads to a critique of all forms of religious "enthusiasm".[71] Stillingfleet points to Montanism as the classic expression of enthusiasm. The appeal to a supernatural "light within" is condemned as a form of psychological disorder which can have tragic impact on community.[72] Turbulence and passion are emotions not suitable to true sober, rational religion.[73] Any sort of appeal to a "supernatural source", such as sacred doctrine, sacred tradition, or supernatural religious experience, will produce a perverse, irrational, and potentially dangerous, ecclesiological vision.

The third dictate also addresses the Latitudinarian concern for the priority of the moral over the doctrinal in religious life. Latitudinarians insisted that a basic universal set of moral norms are established "essentially and unalterably" - they are not derived from divisive sectarian debates over what constitutes the will of God revealed in scripture.[74] Dogmatic sectarianism disrupts the rational moral decorum of society. Edward Fowler's presentation of the

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71. ibid., pp.122-3.

72. ibid., pp.123.

73. ibid., pp.124.

74. see John Spurr's discussion, "Latitudinarianism and the Restoration Church", pp.65-66.

Latitudinarian position, The Principles and Practices of Certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England (1670), highlights this point:

> the grand designe of the Gospel is to make men good: not to intoxicate their heads with a systeme of opinions; but to reform mens lives, and purifie their natures.[75]

The fourth dictate is "against schism". It argues that there must be a way agreed upon to determine and decide all those controversies arising in this society, which immediately tend to the breaking the peace and unity of it.[76] The "management" of religious controversy is a critical element in ecclesiology since religious conflict divides and destroys an ecclesial community. Since Stillingfleet adopts the basic jurisprudence position that the "end and design of nature is, preservation and continuance", therefore, the sheer stability and survival of any community, civil or ecclesiastical, becomes a major concern in his ecclesiology.

Stillingfleet's Mischief of Separation [1680] argued that the fundamental problem threatening ecclesiastical stability was not heresy, but the problem

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75. quoted from "Latitudinarianism and the Restoration Church" by John Spurr, pp.66.

76. ibid., pp.132.

of divisiveness over non-essentials.[77] If uniformity and peace were the fundamental goals of ecclesial order, then schism and divisiveness were fundamental sins. The vital necessity of uniformity was not defended on the basis of any intrinsic apostolic purity of the episcopal order but on the basis of the need to prevent the disruption of public order by religious contention.

As I have noted this shift from heresy to schism as the key problematic for ecclesial life is a marked feature of seventeenth-century religious thought in England and the Continent. Stillingfleet sees schism as the most deadly threat to the life of ecclesial societies:[78]

> For what diseases are to bodies, age and fire are to buildings, that divisions and animosities are to societies, all equally tending to the ruin and

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77. The Mischief of Separation provoked considerable debate. John Locke penned a reply which was never published (Critical notes on Edward Stillingfleet). John Marshall is working on the manuscript for publication, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men" p.416.

78. Irenicum, pp.136. This position raised the anger of Richard Baxter in Richard Baxter's Answer to Doctor Edward Stillingfleet's Charge of Separation, [1680]. Baxter pointed out that such a vision of church order would lead to great instability since the form of church government would depend upon the prerogative of the prince rather than upon any divinely ordained reality. Stillingfleet responded with The Unreasonableness of Separation [1681]. Here he attacked Nonconformity for its factionalism, divisiveness, and its doctrinal intransigence.

destruction of the things they seize upon.[79]

Stillingfleet points out that "diversity of opinion" can coexist with peace and unity in a rightly ordered society as long as it is restricted to the realm of privacy.[80]

> a man may safely enjoy his own private apprehensions... so long as a man keeps his opinion to himself...for the opinion itself is an internal act of the mind, and therefore is punishable by no external power, as that of the magistrate or church is.[81]

However, when diversity of opinion manifests itself as a public act which breaks with the legally defined boundaries for religious doctrine and discipline it represents a "tendency to schism" which is disruptive of ecclesiastical and political order.[82]

> it is not mere difference of opinion, judgement, and apprehension, which lays men open to the censures of that power which moderates and rules a religious society; but the endeavour by difference of opinion to alienate men's spirits one from another, and thereby to break the society into factions and divisions, is that which makes men liable to restraint and judgement.[83]

It is this politically disruptive dimension of opinions that is dangerous. When the diversity of religious

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79. Irenicum, pp.133.

80. ibid., pp.134.

81. ibid., pp.134.

82. ibid., pp.134.

83. ibid., pp.135.

opinion becomes hardened into public doctrinal dispute it creates a situation of irresolvable ecclesiastical and political conflict. Stillingfleet argues that there is a need for an authority with the power to diffuse doctrinal disputes. This power is not the power to determine with certainty the content of religious truth, but simply "the power of ending controversies":

> I assert, that as to things in the judgement of the primitive and reformed churches left undetermined by the law of God, and in matters of mere order and decency, and wholly as to the form of government, every one, notwithstanding what his private judgement may be of them, is bound for the peace of the church of God to submit to the determination of the lawful governors of the church. And this is that power of ending controversies, which I suppose to be lodged in a church society; not such a one as whereto every man is bound to conform is private judgement; but whereto every private person is bound to submit in order to the church's peace...For their must be a difference made between the liberty and freedom of a man's own judgement, and the authority of it: for supposing men out of all society, every man hath both; but societies being entered, and contracts made, though men can never part with the freedom of their judgments...yet they must part with the authority of their judgments; i.e. in matters concerning the government of the society, they must be ruled by persons in authority over them.[84]

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[84]. ibid., pp.150-1. A similar point is made by John Tillotson in his sermon "Instituted Religion Not Intended to Undermine Natural", The Works of John Tillotson, (London: J.F.Dove, 1820), vol.5. He states that "No zeal for any positive institution in religion can justify the violation of natural law" (pp.319). The demands of civil order and social peace are primary and constitute a natural moral and political order for ecclesial life that all specific positive ecclesiastical forms must be subjected to (pp.315-318).

The theological power of infallibility is thereby demythologized and transformed into a more straightforward power of arbitration between contending parties. The goal of this arbitration is not some elusive quest for certainty. The goal is the maintenance of social and ecclesiastical peace though the authoritative imposition of settlements on troublesome, divisive, and unresolvable theological debates.

The fifth dictate establishes the principle of contract or consent as the basis for the authority of a particular ecclesial order:

> that all who are admitted into this society, must consent to be governed by the laws and rules of that society, according to its constitution.[85]

Ecclesial society like civil is forged by contract and consent.[86] This consent is expressed in baptism. This external profession should entitle one to full participation in the sacramental life of the church.[87] The tacit consent given by participation in the ecclesial life of the community entails that one gives up the right to challenge the juridical authority of that community in its management of public doctrine and discipline.

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85. ibid., pp.159.

86. ibid., pp.159.

87. ibid., pp.164-5.

The sixth dictate establishes the necessity of a judicial policing function within a religious society. The Latitudinarian ecclesial order needs the tools to deal with the enthusiasts, malcontents, and schismatics who disrupt ecclesial life.

> Nature dictates further, that in a well-ordered society, every offender against the rules of that society must give an account of his actions to the governors of that society, and submit to the censures of it, according to the judgement of the rulers of it.[88]

The end of discipline and law is not revenge but "the preservation of the society".[89] Thus, the punishment meted out to the schismatic, though it may be similar in content, is different in intention to that meted out to the heretic. The ultimate ecclesiastical offense for sixteenth-century ecclesiology was heresy. It merited punishment because it jeopardized the salvation of souls. Schismatics, the classical type of ecclesiastical offenders for Stillingfleet, merit punishment because they are troublesome and disruptive of a stable ecclesial order.

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88. ibid., pp.168.

89. ibid., pp.169.

F. Conclusion:

Stillingfleet's proposals for a neutral, non-doctrinal, non-controversial ecclesiology entailed a very fundamental departure from the doctrinal approach underlying the conflicting Presbyterian and High Church ecclesiologies. Needless to say, his contributions provoked even more controversy and debate in the post-Restoration church. However, Stillingfleet was flexible and attempted to couch his proposals in more palatable terms. For example, in the second edition of Irenicum Stillingfleet attempted to distance himself from the crude Erastianism of Hobbes. With important qualifications he was willing to readmit the traditional distinction between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions which was rejected by Hobbes. It is arguable that these adjustments were little more than decorative. Packaging the theory in more conservative terminology did not fundamentally alter the thrust of Latitudinarian ecclesiology. However, it may in part account for its rapid rise to dominance. Stillingfleet and Latitudinarians such as Tillotson jockeyed to maintain a "moderate" middle ground position.[90] They

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90. John Spurr offers a defense for the claim of the Restoration Latitude-men to represent a broad mainstream position within the Church of England, "Latitudinarianism and the Restoration Church", pp.61-82. In defending the non-controversial character of

became a major voice in the ecclesiological debates of post-Restoration England.

With the Glorious Revolution and the growing Whig supremacy Latitudinarianism did become the establishment ecclesiastical position in the Anglican Church. This was reflected in the elevation to the episcopacy of many prominent Latitudinarian divines in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1689.[91] It was also reflected in the successful political and ecclesiastical management of High Church protest movements (the Convocation Debate and the Non-jurors) in the early eighteenth century.

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their theological contribution Spurr concentrates over their debates with Puritans on the question of faith and the role of reason and moral action. However, he overlooks the distinctive ecclesiological position forged by Latitudinarians.

91. Stillingfleet, Burnet, Grove, and Fowler became bishops, John Tillotson and Thomas Tenison eventually became archbishops of Canterbury. John Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men" pp.419, 427; M.Goldie, "The Nonjurors, episcopacy and the origins of the Convocation Controversy", in E.Cruickshanks (ed.) Ideology and Conspiracy: aspects of Jacobitism, (Edinburgh: J. Donald, 1982) pp.15-16.

CHAPTER V

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DEBATES

1. Conservative Reactions

A. The Convocation Debate

The convergence and common thrust of natural jurisprudence theory and Latitudinarianism towards a liberal Erastianism was well recognized both by High Church writers and by Presbyterians and non-conformists.[1] Simon Lowth, a High Church polemicist and future Non-Juror, directed his polemical fire against these co-conspirators in Of the Subject of Church Power (1685). A complex three-way debate between High Church, Presbyterian, and Latitudinarian parties raged during the Restoration period.

However, with the abrupt victory of Whig and Latitudinarian forces in 1689 these academic debates were transformed into a major political and ecclesiastical crisis for conservative forces dissatisfied with the new settlement. The Glorious Revolution ushered in a "radical re-appraisal of the

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1. The High Churchmen would include Heylyn, Thorndike, Pierce, Fulwood, Gunning, Laney, Turner, Cowper, Dodwell, Bull, Fell, Lowth, Sheldon and Sancroft. Addressing the church question from the Presbyterian tradition were Richard Baxter, John Barret, John Humfrey, Stephen Lobb, and John Howe.

whole role of the national church in English society".[2] In the aftermath of the revolution there were two major events which signalled a conservative challenge to the growing dominance of the Latitudinarian approach - the Non-Juror movement and the Convocation debate. In both of these cases conservative discontent failed to dislodge the influence of Latitudinarianism over the Anglican intellectual and ecclesiastical establishment.

The Convocation debate was the most heated ecclesiological debate in the period between the Revolution of 1689 and the rise of the Tractarian movement. This "High Church revolt" indicated the strength and, at the same time, the confusion of the conservative response to the increasingly influential tradition of religious liberalism. Francis Atterbury was the key figure in leading the revolt of the lower clergy against the Latitudinarian policies of the Anglican bishops and Whig politicians. In 1696 he published an anonymous pamphlet, entitled "A Letter to a Convocation Man, concerning the Rights, Powers, and Privileges" which argued for a reinterpretation of the constitutional rights of convocation. The main focus

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2. G.V.Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State: 1688-1730, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1975), pp.vii.

of the letter dealt with the grievances of the lower clergy concerning the laxity in doctrine and discipline in the church.[3] Atterbury stated that,

> an open looseness in men's principles and practices and a settled contempt of religion and the priesthood have prevailed everywhere [nurtured by] a sort of men, under the style of Deists, Socinians, Latitudinarians, Deniers of Mysteries and pretended Explainers of them, to undermine and overthrow the Catholic Faith.[4]

Atterbury was particularly outraged by the episcopal leniency shown towards John Toland's Christianity not Mysterious. This would become a major issue in crystallizing the conflict of the lower clergy against the Latitudinarian archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison. The call for a formal censure of Toland for heresy was part of a move by Convocation to reassert ecclesiastical authority in matters of doctrine.[5] In a more direct assault on the Latitudinarian position Atterbury suggested a key text of one of the leading Latitudinarian spokesmen (Bishop Burnet's commentary on the Thirty-Nine Articles) should be censured for its heretical views.

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3. Francis Atterbury, A letter to a Convocation-Man concerning the Rights, Powers and Privileges of that Body, (London: T.Bennet, 1701 ed.).

4. quoted from G.V.Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State: 1688-1730, pp.48-9.

5. ibid., pp.58-9.

The mere fact of setting up a committee to examine texts for doctrinal orthodoxy was in itself a challenge to established Latitudinarian ecclesiastical policy. It was an attempt by Convocation to exercise a role abandoned by the bishops. Atterbury wished to re-assert basic dimensions of ecclesial authority: 1) the autonomy of the church in directing its own policies; 2) ecclesiastical control over doctrine; 3) ecclesiastical control over discipline. The bishops stood with the government in opposing these demands. Thus the lower clergy found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to adopt a stance as the main defenders of the rights of the church against the laxity of the bishops and the political agenda of the state.

The novelty of the High Church revolt led by Atterbury was that it challenged the political corner-stone of Latitudinarian strategy - the entrenchment of Latitudinarianism through the episcopacy. While stressing the significance of the episcopacy for the church, the High Church party attempted to short-circuit the authority of the bishops and shift the real power for the independent direction of ecclesial affairs to the Lower House of Convocation. It was a daring move. Atterbury dug deep into constitutional history to cull

out precedents for the independence and authority of Convocation in relation to the episcopal and political authorities. Atterbury argued that Convocation was an ecclesiastical analogue to Parliament - that it had rights, powers, and privileges in the ecclesiastical realm similar to those of Parliament in the civil realm.[6] In the confrontation with the Erastian episcopacy Convocation would be the vehicle to legislate the Church back to High Church principles and practice. Convocation would be the source of legislative policy in the ecclesiastical realm. Atterbury's arguments were well received by dissatisfied clergy. Archbishop Tenison asked William Wake to write a rebuttal.[7] Wake's book The Authority of Christian Princes over their Ecclesiastical Synods, tended to confirm the High Church party's worst fears. Wake began with a strong Erastian argument stressing the complete submission of the church to the state.[8] Although he effectively challenged Atterbury's arguments on the question of historical precedents for the independent authority of Convocation,

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6. John Henry Newman, Historical Sketches, (London: Longmans, 1901), vol.3, "The Convocation of the Province of Canterbury", p.346-347.

7. William Wake would succeed Tenison as Archbishop in 1716.

8. G.V.Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State: 1688-1730, pp.51-2.

nevertheless, his fine historical points were largely obscured by his heavy-handed employment of Erastian ideology to attempt to blunt Atterbury's claims. His argument indicated that the defense of Erastianism was as important to the Latitudinarian bishops as the defense of their own episcopal authority in relation to Convocation. This concern for a strong defense of Latitudinarian Erastianism was highlighted with the entrance of Benjamin Hoadly into the debate. Hoadly emerged as the champion of Latitudinarian clerics against Atterbury and the High Churchmen. His attack on the High Church position was based on a such a strident Erastianism that it earned him censure from the Lower House of Convocation for "dishonouring the Church" as well as thanks from the Whig dominated House of Commons for his defense of the authority of the state.[9]

B. Anomalies in the High Church Response:

As the Convocation debate unfolded the Lower House found itself in full-scale conflict with the Tenison and the episcopacy. Indeed it, would seem that Tenison and his pamphleteers deliberately provoked them to a

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[9]. Gordon Rupp, Religion in England 1688-1791 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp.90. Rupp offers a brief history of Hoadly's major controversies pp.88-101.

situation of outright revolt against his episcopal authority in order to put these High Church dissenters in a most curious and uncomfortable position. But Atterbury and the Lower House of Convocation stuck to their guns. G.V.Bennett writes,

> Atterbury, at least, was clear what his goal was: not just to harass the Archbishop but to make of Convocation an instrument by which urgently needed measures could be taken to restore the authority and status of the Church. And this meant, first of all, that they had to assert that the Lower House was the spiritual counter-part of the House of Commons. They had to establish their constitutional autonomy or else the Archbishop would use his position as President of the Convocation to stifle all discussion.[10]

However, in presenting these claims for Convocation Atterbury's High Church rhetoric was wedded to theories and strategies that had a Latitudinarian ring to them. His theory of convocation was based on a theory of the fundamental parallelism between church polity and civil polity. Atterbury argued that the "state-model" was normative for understanding the critical role of Convocation.[11] The English Synod should be modelled on the English Parliament. His arguments were not altogether dissimilar to those of Stillingfleet:

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[10]. G.V.Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State: 1688-1730, pp.57.

[11]. Francis Atterbury, The Rights, Powers, and Privileges of an English Convocation, (London, 1701 ed.) pp.138.

> The more our Church shall resemble the state in her temper and manner of government, the nearer still will she approach to primitive practice...This happy frame would by all means be kept up; and it is highly expedient for every church and state that the ecclesiastical polity should be adapted to the civil, as nearly as is consistent with the original plan of church government.[12]

Edmund Gibson's fine historical critique of Atterbury's position pointed out two elements of his argument that seemed to contradict traditional ecclesiological approaches. First, the core of the argument was an appeal to the basic analogies between Church government and contemporary parliamentary procedures. This argument effectively overrides the appeal to history and tradition in the determination to illustrate the fact that the rights of Convocation are parallel to those of Parliament.[13] Gibson demonstrates that Atterbury skews the historical evidence in attempting to state his case.[14] Secondly, Gibson points out that the overall

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[12]. ibid. pp.138.

[13]. E.Gibson, Synodus Anglicana (1702) (Oxford, 1854) pp.xlvii, 4.

[14]. Atterbury drew upon a very well-known and highly successful Whig argument, namely, the ideology of "immemorial Parliamentary right". Quentin Skinner points out that the Whig interpretation of political history became accepted doctrine in the English revolutionary era even though its historiography was "crass" and "tendentious" ("History and Ideology in the English Revolution", The Historical Journal, 8 (1965) pp.151-178). However, Atterbury found out that his attempt to put forward a similar argument for the rights

effect of his proposed strategy would entail "a diminution of the canonical authority of the archbishop and bishops over their clergy". Such a development "must bring us by degrees to a state of presbytery".[15]

The High Church position in the debate had become confused and convoluted due to this reworking of ecclesiastical issues in the light of political analogues. Newman's study of this controversy provides a number of interesting insights. Newman argues that the post-Revolution Church had been thrown into an "anomalous state". The Church had "got into some wrong position, which put all its functions out of order, and made them work in perverse and fantastic ways".[16] The High Church party found itself in opposition to episcopal and political authorities. They were ecclesiastical conservatives who found themselves in fundamental dissent with the ecclesiastical establishment. They were manoeuvering to create a situation in which ecclesiastical authority would begin to flow into the Lower House of Convocation. They

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of Convocation would not receive such a warm and uncritical welcome. When the immemorial historical rights of an ecclesiastical institution were advanced suddenly the sword of Whig historiography was sharpened.

15. ibid., pp.xlvii, 4.

16. Historical Sketches, pp.352-353.

pursued their cause with strategies and arguments analogous to those of political liberals - arguments "resting on law rather than on ecclesiastical principles".[17] Despite the High Church sympathies of Convocation it was in toe to toe conflict with the episcopal order and fighting valiantly to maintain an independent voice in opposition to authorities to whom in principle they were subservient.[18] Newman pointed out that the High Church stand against the bishops was based on claims for the clergy which were incompatible with the "episcopal principle".[19]

On the other hand, episcopal leaders who had come to see the significance of their vocation in terms of their political influence pressed for the suppression of the High Church party even though it was this party that

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17. ibid., pp.353.

18. ibid. pp.377-377. "...it is but fair to state the circumstances which led to these strange irregularities on the part of the Lower House. In truth, they found, or thought they found, that their obedience as presbyters to Bishops was to be made of in order to betray and destroy the Church; they were in a net from which they could not disentangle themselves, and having lately had their Bishops' sanction to the doctrine that, in extreme cases, it was lawful to renounce the Lord's anointed, and his heirs after him, they were tempted to believe that on similar grounds, and much more in a case of conscience, it was religious to engage in a systematic opposition to the successors of the Apostles."

19. ibid., pp.389.

stressed the exalted status of the episcopacy in the spiritual life of the church. They may have recognized that the implementation of the High Church vision would entail a substantial sacrifice of their position of political influence. The bishops resisted this call to leave their political nets and follow the more "supernatural" episcopal vocation proposed by High Church ecclesiastics.[20]

The loss of theological clarity on the nature of the church led to a "scene of confusion", a "troublesome stage", in which ecclesiastical issues and debates were reworked through the categories of political theory. The resulting confusion was both practical and theoretical. Newman argued that the nineteenth-century Church was "still encompassed with the waters into which she then was plunged".[21]

Despite Newman's critique of their ecclesiastical strategy, nevertheless he was deeply sympathetic with their overall goals.

> Moreover, with all their faults and mistakes, they certainly had an enlarged view of the duties of an Ecclesiastical Synod; and grasped the principles, and aimed at wielding the powers, of the Church with a vigour that the court Bishops could not comprehend. The aspect of latitudinarianism and infidelity was very threatening; and they felt

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20. ibid., pp.353-354.

21. ibid., p.354.

> these principles of evil were to be met, not by mere controversy, not by individuals relying on what is called the force of reason, nor again by mere civil authority, but by the moral power of the Church, whether as a body, or in its authorities, by Bishops or Convocations; by that high influence, in fact, which broke the power of paganism and baffled the schools of philosophy. But so far from exercising this their special gift, the very heads of the Church were in terms of friendship with its enemies.[22]

The Atterbury party set out to meet "the new heresy". Despite the fact that the High Churchmen floundered in their efforts, nevertheless, according to Newman, their instincts were right and their cause was noble:

> let it never be forgotten, that, whatever were the errors of the Convocation of our Church in the beginning of the eighteenth century, it expired in an attempt to brand the doctrines of Hoadly. May the day be merely delayed![23]

C. The Aftermath:

The High Church agenda of the Lower House of Convocation increasingly came into conflict with the liberal and Latitudinarian views of the court and episcopacy. The fuse of liberal tolerance is often short when it comes to conservatism. In response to the growing pressure of the Convocation the government, supported by the episcopacy, eventually took the

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22. ibid., pp.379, 380-381.

23. John Henry Newman, Via Media (London, Longmans, Green and Co. 1908), vol.2, p.40.

draconic measure of suspending the institution.

The Convocation debate points to a number of important conclusions. First, despite the political and ecclesiastical influence of Latitudinarianism, nevertheless there was still considerable popular support for the High Church position. The strength of the conservative reaction forced Latitudinarian theorists to pull back from the radical Latitudinarianism and Erastianism of their most outspoken opponent of High Church dissent, Benjamin Hoadly. Hoadly represented the aggressive Erastianism of Latitudinarianism at the turn of the century. He was rewarded for his political-ecclesiastical services by an appointment as Bishop of Bangor. He exemplified the Latitudinarian stress on the political role of the episcopacy.[24] In 1716 he began an attack on the ecclesiological position of the Non-Jurors and in 1717 published a study on The Nature of the Kingdom or the Church of Christ which argued that the church does not have any visible structures of authority apart from the state. This sermon led to a another bitter debate ("the Bangorian controversy") which pitted Hoadly against Non-

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[24]. His political activities were so demanding that he never bothered to set foot in the diocese which he pastored, Gordon Cross, "Hoadly", A Dictionary of English Church History, ed. S.L.Ollard and G.Crosse, (London: Mowbray, 1912), pp.279.

Jurors such as William Law, Charles Leslie, and George Hickes.[25] The attempt by Convocation to condemn the opinions of Hoadly was the immediate cause of the suppression of Convocation in 1717.[26] However, Hoadly's extremism clearly intensified religious controversy rather than alleviated it. In the long run this position proved to be more of a liability than an asset for a tradition which prided itself on diffusing the impact of religious controversy in the public forum. In response to this problem Latitudinarian theorists

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25. On the Non-Juror controversy see L.M.Hawkins, Allegiance in Church and State: The Problem of the Non-Jurors in the English Revolution (London: Routledge, 1928). Hawkins is influenced by the work of J.N. Figgis. He argues that the Non-Juror movement was an attempt to assert ecclesiastical independence in the face of the growing power of the modern state. Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the 18th Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), and Gordon Rupp, Religion in England 1688-1791 reject this thesis. Sykes argues that the Non-Jurors were Filmerians who were primarily concerned with the "divine right" of the monarchy and, accordingly, repudiated the Revolution of 1689 as an illegitimate transfer of monarchical power (pp.286ff.). James Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979) places Charles Leslie, the leading Non-Juror ecclesiologist, firmly within the Filmerian tradition (pp.133-139). Hawkins's study is particularly misleading in attempting to establish a link between the Filmerian theory of Charles Leslie and the Latitudinarian ecclesiology of William Warburton (pp.178-80).

26. The aftermath of the conservative use of Convocation during the Convocation and Bangorian Controversies was that the institution was suppressed for over a century (1717-1852).

attempted to develop an ecclesiological position that was more sensitive to conservative interests. We see this major modification taking place in the work of Warburton.

Secondly, despite the ecclesiastical strength of the High Church party, nevertheless it failed to construct a coherent line of argument in response to Latitudinarianism. The latent popular support for the High Church cause which emerged with some force in the Convocation debate did not translate into a successful response. As Newman concluded in his survey of the debate, the conservative response, despite its vigour and fire, was marked by confusion, lack of consistency, and lack of creative direction. Traditional conservative trajectories had run up against issues which they could not successfully grapple with nor resolve. After the ecclesiological furor of the early eighteenth century the ongoing discourse on the nature of church would be largely determined by Latitudinarian theorists.

2. Warburton's Revision of Latitudinarian Ecclesiology

The most outstanding and influential text in ecclesiology during the eighteenth century was Warburton's Alliance Between Church and State. The success of his contribution is indicated by the fact that his work became the standard text-book for established Anglican ecclesiology until the beginning of the nineteenth century. In constructing his position Warburton had to confront a number of important positions (non-jurors, civic humanists, dissenters, Lockean jurisprudence) that were not congruent with the thrust of his approach. Warburton offers a via media between the radical Erastians such as Hoadly who make the church "a rope of sand" and those who put forward a "divine right" ecclesiology leading to a "doctrine of intolerance which makes the church an inquisition".[27]

In order to situate Warburton's place in eighteenth-century ecclesiological debates one need only turn to his most influential and severe critic, Henry Bolingbrooke. Bolingbrooke was critical of Warburton's jurisprudence model of church and state as two distinct and independent societies orientated to two distinct

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27. William Warburton, The Alliance Between Church and State, Works, (London: T.Cadell & W.Davies, 1811), vol.7, pp.23.

ends.[28] He argued that this approach collapsed the idea of religion into that of "church". This disrupts the balance of the political realm by throwing a significant degree of power into the hands of non-civic authorities. It creates an "imperium in imperio, "the greatest absurdity imaginable".[29]

Bolingbrooke represented the eighteenth-century civic humanist tradition in England. Civic humanism stressed the need for a cohesive communal ethos and communal order as the basis for a vibrant sovereign political society. Religion for Bolingbrooke was "civil religion". Religion had to be fully integrated and supportive of this republican ethos and order. In the eighteenth-century civic humanism this concept of civil religion had a strong Erastian flavour.

When we examine the grounds for Bolingbrooke's opposition to the approach developed by Warburton they clearly indicate that Warburton was deliberately moving Latitudinarian ecclesiology away from its earlier Erastian accent. Benjamin Hoadly had swung Latitudinarian ecclesiology into a full allegiance with secular Erastianism. His position polarized High Church

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[28]. Henry Bolingbroke, Works (London: J.Johnson, 1809), vol.7, pp.123-4; vol.6, pp.480.

[29]. Henry Bolingbroke, Works, vol.6, pp.479-483.

opinion and Presbyterianism against him. The experience of the resulting heated ecclesiological debates of the early eighteenth century led to a growing recognition that Latitudinarian ecclesiology would be stalled in its tracks if it refused to move beyond a Hobbesian Erastianism. Its chief goal of nurturing social peace through religion was being jeopardized by its own dogmatic Erastianism. Warburton realized that Latitudinarian ecclesiology needed to provide a framework that could accommodate the concerns of High Church Anglicanism for the independence and distinctiveness of the Church. Warburton developed an argument that underlined these characteristics.

However, the strategy he adopted left unsatisfied the theological aspirations of High Church and Presbyterian ecclesiology. The reason for this dissatisfaction lies in the fact that Warburton constructed his argument in such a way that he was able to bracket any appeal to theological claims as the rationale for the independent status of Church polity.

Warburton's approach, like that of Stillingfleet's, is very deliberately based on jurisprudence rather than theology. He appeals to leading figures of the Enlightenment tradition of natural jurisprudence

(especially Grotius, Althusius, and Pufendorf).[30] Employing natural jurisprudence terminology he states that he wants to develop his ecclesiology on the basis of an analysis of "the essence and end of civil society, upon the fundamental principles of the law of nature and nations".[31] Ecclesiology is to take its cues from political theory rather than theology:

> I do not propose to defend an Established religion...on the principles of this or that scheme of religion, but on the great and unerring maxims of the law of nature and nations".[32]

R.W.Greaves points out that Warburton's argument is built on a theory of corporate personality. This argument was developed in order to highlight the fact that the modern sovereign state must embrace a plurality

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30. Warburton seems to follow the Pufendorf school of Grotian jurisprudence in his stress on the need to make a stronger distinction between the political and ecclesiastical societies than that which was offered by Latitudinarians such as Stillingfleet. See L. Krieger's discussion of Pufendorf's views on church-state relations in The Politics of Discretion: Pufendorf and the Acceptance of Natural Law (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp.227-244. Pufendorf's treatise De Habitu Religionis Christianae ad Vitam Civilem (Lund, 1673) had been translated into English in 1719, Of the Relation Between Church and State (London, 1719). Warburton's Alliance was published in 1736.

31. William Warburton, The Alliance Between Church and State, pp.22.

32. William Warburton, The Alliance Between the Church and State, pp.23; R.W.Greaves, "The Working of the Alliance", in Essays in Modern English Church History, G.V.Bennett and J.D.Walsh (eds.), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) pp.163-167.

of "societies", "corporations", and institutions, as well as individuals, within any given national territory.[33] This theory stressed the role of mediating institutions within the state. It was warmly embraced by Warburton, and Edmund Burke, who applauded Warburton's contribution. A number of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century political theorists such as Laski, Figgis, and Gierke also underlined the importance of this approach.[34]

By employing the concept of corporate pluralism Warburton was able to accommodate High Church concerns for the "independence" and the "distinctiveness" of the Church. However the meaning of these terms is radically altered given his commitment to Latitudinarian jurisprudence. The church is independent and distinct simply because it is a "society" directed to distinct ends. Its independence is of the same character as the independence of any economic, literary, or scientific corporation.

> That two such societies [church and state] have two distinct wills and personalities I shall show. When any number of men form themselves into a

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33. Otto von Gierke, Johannes Althusius und die Entwicklung der naturrechlichen Staatstheorien (Breslau, 1913) translated by Bernard Freyd as The Development of Political Theory (New York: Norton, 1939).

34. See footnote on the school of English Pluralism in chapter 2 (fn.29).

> society, whether civil or religious, this society becomes a body, different from that aggregate which the number of individuals composed before the society was formed. Else the society would be nothing; or, in other words, no society would be formed. Here then is a body, distinct from the aggregate composed by the number of individuals: and is called factitious, to distinguish it from the natural body; being, indeed, the creature of human will...We conclude then, that the will and personality of a community are as different and distinct from the will and personality of the numbers of which it is composed, as the body itself is. And, that as in the erection of a community, a factitious body was created, so were a factitious personality and will. The reality of this personality is clearly seen in the administration of the law of nations, where two states are considered as two men living in the state of nature.[35]

Warburton argues that any given community can erect "as many such societies as these please". Any assembly of persons coming together for a distinct purpose constitutes a "factitious moral person". The church is one of many diverse corporate entities geared to diverse ends.

> Because the body, personality, and will, of such societies being all factitious, the storehouse from whence they come, is as inexhaustible as the wants of mankind.[36] ...for community being the genus, several societies, as the species, may, indeed, be contained in it.[37]

These corporate societies must generate their own

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[35]. Warburton, The Alliance Between Church and State, pp.210.

[36]. ibid., pp.211.

[37]. ibid., pp.324.

institutional patterns and structures of power which promote their distinctive ends. Similar to any corporate society, the Church must have "all the power and authority, that as a religious body...is necessary to preserve it as a well-ordered society".[38]

Thus, Warburton, in a move which seems to break with earlier Latitudinarian Erastianism, argues that the independence and distinctiveness of the Church entails independence and distinctiveness for its institutional and juridical structures.

> a society without officers, degrees of subordination, and powers adapted to its nature, ...[is] as inconsistent, unintelligible an idea as a house without walls, roof, or apartments...he who so talks, intends to give us a society in words, but to deprive us of it in reality.[39]

However, in underlining the institutional integrity and independence of the Church he has actually developed rather than jettisoned the Latitudinarian argument. Warburton develops a theory of corporate pluralism which accommodates that High Church concern for a sense of ecclesial independence. However, he does so in such a way that he has not compromised the traditional liberal rejection of the validity of any appeal to a theological

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38. ibid., pp.70.

39. ibid., pp.74.

doctrine of the church.[40] Warburton still insisted that the church is an institutional society comparable to other human institutional societies and that the mode of ecclesial organization is product of "human discretion" rather than biblical doctrine.[41] His contribution underlined the fact that this principle was far more fundamental to Latitudinarian ecclesiology than any commitment to an Erastian ecclesiastical policy.

Warburton has a fairly optimistic view of how all of these diverse corporate societies will interact within a national community. Diverse societies meet diverse needs. These social functions are essentially complementary rather than conflictual.[42] The state exercises coercive sovereignty in the national community. It is geared to the promotion of social

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40. "It is as a "factitious moral person", and in no other way, that Warburton considers the church. Here was another strange turn of thought. For the Nonjurors, also for the high churchmen, the church as an independent society was a theological notion (with no doubt political consequences), which was found in Scripture and justified from the Fathers. Warburton turned it into a principle of political science, with the church in this respect homogeneous with the state". (R.W.Greaves, "The Working of the Alliance", in Essays in Modern English Church History, G.V.Bennett and J.D.Walsh (eds.), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) pp.163-167.)

41. Warburton, The Alliance Between Church and State, pp.164.

42. ibid., pp.62-63.

peace. Religion is directed to the "care of souls". There is no fundamental conflict between these two distinct social entities.[43] Warburton goes so far as to state that "the administration of each society is exercised in so remote spheres that they can never meet to clash".[44]

Thus, Warburton rejects the traditional Erastian argument for the establishment of religion, namely that since an independent Church will fundamentally disrupt and fragment social order, therefore, all major institutional dimensions of ecclesiastical society must be under the direct sovereignty of the state. It is possible for the Church to be "established", however, this will be due to a free contract or alliance between the church and state. In such an "alliance" all ecclesial power does not devolve to the state.[45] Warburton proposes the concept of a "federate alliance" rather than Erastian "union":

> ...in an incorporate union of two societies, one of them is lost and dissolved in the other; by which means, all the power in question devolves upon the Superior. But, in a federate alliance the two societies still subsist entire...though in a subordination of

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43. ibid., pp.62-63.

44. ibid., pp.63.

45. Warburton, The Alliance Between Church and State, pp.160.

one to the other.[46]

Warburton argues that his theory of the federate alliance with the juridical authority of the state over the church accurately reflects the actual practice of Church-State relations in England.[47]

However, why should there be any need for such an establishment? The reasons, for Warburton, are purely utilitarian. In chapter three of the Alliance ("The Natural Defects of Civil Society and the Place of Religion") he deals with the political utility of establishment for the state. Warburton accepts the liberal concept of the state as an institution with a limited agenda. He rejects the notion that the state is geared to the promotion of the full human moral and religious good.[48] He believes that the pursuit of such an agenda is ineluctably divisive and disruptive. He concurs with Locke in restricting the state to more mundane matters of material well-being, social peace, and individual liberty.[49] Warburton states that "the sole end of civil society is the conservation of body

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46. ibid., pp.160.

47. ibid., pp.viii.

48. ibid., pp.41.

49. ibid., pp.41-42.

and goods".[50]

However, Warburton anticipates two fairly important modern critiques of the Lockean state. First of all, because of the restricted function of the liberal state it cannot promote the internal moral virtues and dispositions in its members that are necessary for the formation of a morally enlightened and civil citizenry. Vice and virtue, however important they may be for the effective operation of the liberal state, nevertheless lie in the realm of privacy outside of the reach of the public arm of the state. Religion operates in this realm of privacy and, therefore, can provide significant service for the state in this arena.[51] Secondly, Warburton argues that "political obligation" is a fundamental problematic for a state geared to servicing the competition of self-interested groups and individuals.[52] Legitimacy is supplied by the fragile effort to provide a reciprocal satisfaction of diverse interests. Obviously, within any given situation there must ineluctably be a significant level of wants, needs, and interests that are left unsatisfied. What can deter individuals and groups from subverting the political

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50. ibid., pp.45.

51. ibid., pp.27-8.

52. ibid., pp.31f.

order in order to pursue their unsatisfied goals? The failure to abide by the established structures of reciprocity can be met with coercion. However, religion with its emphasis on obedience to established authorities, its divine moral commands, and its accent on selfless service to the community can provide a depth of moral and political obligation that goes beyond the more tenuous resources operative in the liberal state.[53]

From the state the Church receives "endowment" which ensures it public stability, educational power and influence, and freedom from financial dependency on its congregations.[54] Futhermore, through its place in the national legislature, it gains a foothold in the formulation of public policy, as well as power to guard its own ecclesial interests.[55] To some extent the alliance means that the Church is bounded and controlled by the national civil power. However, Warburton argues that this alliance is ecclesially self-serving since the loss of juridical autonomy is relatively insignificant compared to the new opportunities, powers, and influences accorded to the Church through its alliance

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53. ibid., pp.46-47.

54. ibid., pp.108f.

55. ibid., pp.112.

to the State. The Church lends its moral and symbolic support to the liberal state in return for concrete state-supported institutional powers through which it can pursue its religious goals at the national level.

Warburton's approach represents a significant theoretical development of Latitudinarian theory beyond the shrill Erastianism of Benjamin Hoadly. Warburton argued that the distinct institutional societies of Church and State are complementary rather than conflictual. He did not see the need for an Erastian de-clawing of the corporate power of the Church.

However, one may wonder whether his approach entailed any significant modifications for the actual practice of Church-State relations. I would argue that it did. Warburton was satisfied with the existing ecclesial-constitutional system. This system tolerated the concern for ecclesial independence and distinctiveness among high and low church parties. Erastians like Hoadly, on the other hand, were actually dissatisfied with the existing relationship between the church and the state. They wanted to see a more thorough elimination of all traces of ecclesial independence and distinctiveness. Warburton saw that this Erastian strategy was ultimately incompatible with a school of thought in the jurisprudence theory which

recognized and appreciated the critical role of mediating institutions (economic, cultural, scientific, academic corporations, etc.) in promoting individual freedom.

With Warburton the Latitudinarian tradition effectively jettisoned the Erastian option. However, Warburton refused to swing completely over to the other option put forward by the tradition, the Lockean separation of Church and State. Warburton's "federalism" represented a development of eighteenth-century jurisprudence theory beyond Locke. There was a recognition of the public significance of corporate societies distinct from the nation state. Corporate interests were real forces in the political realm. They could not be "separated off" from the dynamics of political life so easily. The positing of an implicit social contract (an alliance) between such societies and the state offered a way of explaining the rational order that should exist in the relation of the state to these corporations (as to individuals). Furthermore, Warburton recognized that the Lockean state was a "defective" and truncated political institution if left to fend for itself. First, the liberal state could not effectively nurture in its citizens the moral fiber and discipline necessary for its political life. Secondly,

beyond its capacity to meet the short-term interests of its citizens it could not offer meaningful justification for the legitimacy of the state and the grounds of political obligation. On both of these scores a meaningful support could be given by non-political institutions such as the Church. Warburton argued that such an "alliance" could support the goals of the liberal state rather than betray them. Thus he delineated a "liberal" Anglican via media between Latitudinarian Erastianism and Lockeanism which seemed to accurately express eighteenth-century ecclesiastical experience.

3. William Paley

Our final spokesman for this now confident and established ecclesiological tradition is William Paley. Paley's works were considered to be the standard textbooks for the study of ethics and religion during the first part of the nineteenth century.

William Paley situates himself in the same "natural jurisprudence" school of thought that was formative for earlier trajectories of latitudinarian ecclesiology. His Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy is developed as a contribution to a tradition which

includes the same line of authorities which are appealed to by Warburton (Grotius, Pufendorf, Locke). However, Paley also reflects the impact of eighteenth-century Scottish social philosophy.[56]

By the end of the eighteenth century Latitudinarian ecclesiology had become confident and somewhat "dogmatic" in its presentation of the basic truths of its theory of church. The debate, for the moment, had been won. Paley asserted without argument that there was no "form of church government" or "constitution" clearly established by the biblical evidence.[57] For Paley the absence of a self-evident biblical model for a divinely instituted ecclesial order meant that such an option was ruled out.

> The truth seems to have been, that such offices were at first erected in the Christian church, as the good order, the instruction, and the exigencies of the society at that time required, without any intention, at least without any declared design, of regulating the appointment, authority, or the distinction of Christian ministers under future circumstances.[58]

Paley argues that the directives of the Gospel are ordered according to two distinct "intentions" or

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56. William Paley, The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, (Edinburgh, 1816) (original ed. 1785), "Preface".

57. ibid., pp.498.

58. ibid., pp.498.

objective . The first focusses on the provision of firm principles and norms to guide the life of individuals. The second provides general directives for the social organization of Christianity. The former, dealing with the realm of the personal, is the realm of theology, the latter, dealing with the social, is the realm of jurisprudence:

> From a view of these distinct parts of the evangelic dispensation, we are led to place a real difference between the religion of particular Christians, and the polity of Christ's church. The one is personal and individual - acknowledges no subjection to human authority - is transacted in the heart - is an account between God and our own consciences alone: the other, appertaining to society (like every thing which relates to joint interest and requires the co-operation of many persons,) is visible and external - prescribes rules of common order, for the observation of which, we are responsible not only to God, but to the society of which we are members, or, what is the same thing, to those with whom the public authority of the society is deposited.
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> But the difference which I am principally concerned to establish consists in this, that whilst the precepts of Christian morality and the fundamental articles of the faith are, for the most part, precise and absolute, are of perpetual, universal, and unalterable obligation; the laws which respect the discipline, instruction, and government of the community, are delivered in terms so general and indefinite as to admit of an application adapted to the mutable condition and varying exigencies of the Christian church...The apostolic directions which are preserved in the writings of the New Testament, seem to exclude no ecclesiastical constitution which the experience and more instructed judgement of future ages might

find it expedient to adopt.[59]

Ecclesiological "directives" are "rules of the society, rather than laws of the religion".

Thus the particular ordering of the Church must be continually adapted on the basis of "considerations of public utility".[60] The distinction of orders in the church (bishops, priest, and deacons) is justified insofar as it is calculated to promote public well-being in society. Paley claims that it does this in three ways: first, through the establishment of an harmonious constitutional order for church government, secondly, the establishment of clerical distinctions that correspond to social class differences "in order to supply each class of the people with a clergy of their own level and description, with whom they may live and associate upon terms of equality", and, thirdly, through the unique honours and economic advantages tied to the higher office to provide incentive for the more gifted members of society to aspire to these ecclesiastic positions.[61] The church, in short, is seen to be "interwoven" with the ends of civil society. The

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59. William Paley, "A Distinction of Orders in the Church Defended Upon Principles of Public Utility", Works, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1842), pp.587-588.

60. ibid., pp.588.

61. ibid., pp.589-590.

rational justification of any form of church order must appeal to general principles of social "utility".[62]

This approach gives ecclesiology a considerable flexibility. It is not tied to any one ecclesiological model. Even the classic Lockean separation of Church and State model stands as only one option among many. However Paley, like most religious liberals of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, feels comfortable in affirming the value of the national Church establishment model. It is this refurbished Christendom model, he believes, that can most adequately cultivate the kind of ecclesiological conditions which promote liberal order.

Paley maintains that any established national religion should be comprehensive enough to embrace a wide diversity of denomination viewpoints. It should "comprehend their disagreement...by uniting all in the articles of their common faith, and in a mode of divine worship that omits every subject of controversy or offense".[63] The achievement of such a framework will promote social peace as well as provide a context for an orderly exchange and debate of religious views.

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62. Paley, The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, pp.499.

63. ibid., pp.506.

However, normally disagreements are so deep and fundamental that if a national establishment is to be developed it must ineluctably make a selection among the various sects.[64] Is it rational to make such a selection, and, if so, what are the criteria for selection? What is wrong with the Lockean strategy of the separation of church and state?

Paley argues that the formation of a comprehensive established church can be rationally justified on the grounds of utility. A strict separation of church and state will lead to a proliferation of sects. Such denominational societies will be characterized by "a polemical and proselytizing spirit". The public will be distracted by the "endless contentions" of religious conflict. The polemical doctrinalism of denominational societies would not be conducive to social peace and the liberal spirit of inquiry.[65] Thus, if there is a significant majority sect within any given country then the establishment of that sect would lead to a more "commodius" form of social order.

Paley's argument was a more refined version of an ironic defense of church establishments proposed by David Hume. Hume argued that free independent churches

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64. ibid., pp.506-507.

65. ibid., pp.510.

tend to generate popular and effective religious leaders who are capable of building highly motivated and unified religious sects. However, the presence of strong ecclesial leadership and communities will lead to greater attention upon and socially disruptive debate over religion and doctrine. Hume concludes that "if we study the matter more closely, we shall find, that this interested diligence of the clergy is what every wise legislator will study to prevent".[66] The "indolence" and inactivity of the clergy nurtured by establishment will "prove in the end advantageous to the political interests of society".[67]

If there is to be an establishment Paley agrees with Warburton that there must be some legal "test" of

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66. David Hume, History, (1773 ed.) vol.4, ch.29, pp.30-31. This passage is found in Adam Smith's discussion of religious establishments in An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), vol.2, pp.275-276. [Bk.V, ch.I, Pt.III, Art.III].

67. quoted in Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), vol.2, pp.276. [Bk.V, ch.I, Pt.III, Art.III]. Smith argues that the defects of denominational societies can be met by "two very easy and effectual remedies": first, the establishment of a national compulsory education system which would serve as a liberal antidote to sectarian teaching; secondly, the promotion of a sweeping tolerance of artistic and literary expressions and public diversions (music, dance, theatre) which would present significant competitors for the private leisure time of the working classes as well as regularly subject religion to "public ridicule" (vol.2, pp.280-281)

religious beliefs. However, these "tests" no longer function to preserve unity of doctrine. The fundamental goal of these tests is to "exclude" intense public religious controversies. They function in such a way as to promote social and religious peace. "Confessions of faith", Paley states, "ought to be converted into articles of peace".[68] He argues that such tests must be watered down to a comprehensive bare minimum and continually updated and adapted to evolving religious perspectives.

> They ought to be made as simple and easy as possible..they should be adapted, from time to time, to the varying sentiments and circumstances of the church in which they are received.[69]

The articles of religion must be continually widened to accommodate new patterns of dissent.[70] They become a purely utilitarian tool for promoting the conditions necessary for a healthy liberal church-state commonwealth.

Eighteenth-century religious "moderates" like Warburton and Paley argued that the Christendom concept

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68. Paley, Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, pp.512. Paley adheres to Pufendorf's maxim that "no true doctrine disturbs the peace, and whatever does disturb the peace is not true", quoted from L.Krieger, The Politics of Discretion, pp.66.

69. Paley, Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, pp.512.

70. ibid., pp.526.

could be redeemed and reworked to fit their new agenda. Indeed, even in the nineteenth century, religious liberals continued to promote new variants of the liberal "Christendom" concept. Religious liberalism is not ineluctably wedded to the strict Lockean separation of Church and State model. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries religious conservatives like the non-Jurors and Tractarians were some of the most vocal proponents of the independence of the Church. A confident liberalism will normally want some firm societal controls over the ecclesial scene in order to deflect religious communities from the distortions of doctrinalism, enthusiasm, and authoritarianism. In the eighteenth-century English religious liberals looked to the legislative arm of government.[71] They proposed and worked for the establishment of a new Christendom - one which would be geared to the interests and aims of a liberal social and religious order.

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[71]. Today, of course, liberals support the Lockean strategy. This is partly due to a changed ecclesial and political situation. Increasingly, mainstream churches have softened their doctrinal rigidity in order to blend with the face of liberal societies. Furthermore, liberals now look to the juridical arm of the state as a key tool for channeling, domesticating, or repressing public expressions of religious commitment that could be disruptive of liberal civil order.

4. Conclusion

With Warburton and Paley we see an ecclesial watershed. Latitudinarian ecclesiology had become the broad mainstream vision for the English ecclesiastic polity. Latitudinarianism worked out the ramifications of natural jurisprudence for ecclesiology. Secular liberals had attempted to dismantle traditional conceptions of state. However, a similar theoretical overhauling had to be done for the Church since it had been so pivotal in the definition of the nature of public order and communal life in the Christian commonwealth. To down-gear the state and leave a strong, doctrinally rigorous, ecclesial institution still intact would have jeopardized the liberal project which attempted to free the individual from any socially imposed concept of the good. The overall thrust of Latitudinarian ecclesiologies was to weaken the church as a major player in communal life. They offered three distinct strategies to accomplish this end: a) Erastianism which called for an alliance of the Church and State whereby the Church would become a department of the state; b) the Lockean strategy which called for a separation of Church and State whereby the public influence of the Church would be marginalized; c) and Warburton's via media.

The Latitudinarian overhaul of the church concept entailed the revision of a whole set of critical theological issues including the question of the status of authoritative doctrine, the sacredness of religious institutions, and the significance of historical developments in doctrine and church institutions. First, religious liberalism rejected the concept of doctrinal truth. The concept of authoritative doctrine was dismissed as philosophically erroneous and politically disruptive for a liberal social and ecclesial order. The new ecclesiology was forged in a debate over "the nature of doctrine". It understood that there was an underlying link between traditional concepts of doctrinal truth and a strong "ecclesiasticism" whether Roman, Anglican, or Presbyterian. Latitudinarian ecclesiology was grounded on an epistemology or a theory of religious knowledge which effectively jettisoned the classical concept of doctrine. Secondly, Latitudinarian liberalism argued that church institutions were not fixed and sacred but mutable, historical, adaptive to the ongoing evolution of culture and society. Third, it rejected the appeal to tradition. It argued that tradition was a-rational. It was past experience and nothing more. Therefore, tradition could not be appealed to as authoritative.

Finally, it reacted strongly against the pietist revival in the eighteenth century and firmly rejected the possibility of supernatural religious experience and the appeal to such experience as the basis for a renewal of religious community.

In all of these areas Latitudinarianism insisted that the ecclesial institution could not make an appeal to any supernatural foundations (doctrine, tradition, sacred institutions, or religious experience). Church structures and institutions fell into the realm of the natural order to be ordered and governed by human prudence. Latitudinarianism desacralized ecclesiology. It shifted the church into the realm of the purely historical and secular, the realm of human law (ius humanum) rather than divine law (ius divinum).

Another important objective of seventeenth-century Latitudinarianism was the establishment of toleration as the critical norm for ecclesiology.[72] However, Latitudinarian ecclesiologists were not overly interested in an extramural toleration of the diverse doctrinal "sectarian" groups that populated the map of English dissent. Sectarian and dogmatic forms of Christianity were perceived to be reactionary forces

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72. J.Tulloch, Rational Theology, vol.2, p.456f.

largely marginal to the thrust of modern civilization.[73] Latitudinarianism sought an internal transformation of ecclesial life based upon the principle of "comprehensiveness" or, to use a more contemporary term,"ecumenism". It wanted toleration and pluralism entrenched and enforced within the church. Toleration was to be an intermural characteristic of ecclesial life.

By the mid-eighteenth century the irenic voice of Latitudinarianism had gained the high ground and became the broad mainstream vision for the English ecclesiastical polity. The lone persecuted voices of Hales, Falkland, and Chillingworth now dominated Anglican ecclesiastical discourse. In part this was due to the intellectual victories scored by Latitudinarian theorists. They raised a new set of questions (surrounding the historicity and pluralism in church doctrines and ecclesiastical practice) that no modern ecclesiology could afford to ignore. The late seventeenth and eighteenth-century conservative responses to Latitudinarian ecclesiology (Presbyterians, Filmerians, High Church Party, Non-Jurors, etc.) proved to be intellectually inadequate, confused in their proposed ecclesial strategies, and politically

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73. ibid., p.466.

ineffective. Yet, even as victory had been achieved the Latitudinarian empire began to be shaken both from within and from without.

PART II

CHAPTER VI

TRADITION AND REVISION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LIBERALISM

> In truth there is at this moment a great progress of the religious mind of our Church to something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century... The poets and philosophers of the age have borne witness to it for many years. Those great names in our literature, Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Coleridge, though in different ways and with essential differences one from another, and perhaps from any church system, still all bear witness to it. Mr. Alexander Knox in Ireland bears a most surprising witness to it. The system of Mr.Irving is another witness to it. The age is moving toward something, and most unhappily the one religious communion among us which has of late years been practically in possession of this something, is the Church of Rome. She alone, amid all the errors and evils of her practical system, has given free scope to the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other feelings which may be especially called Catholic.[1]

Newman looks back with some satisfaction upon a wave of religious and intellectual ferment that was deeply unsettling for Latitudinarianism. A new breed of "disturbers of the peace" had burst onto the scene in the early nineteenth century - romantics, enthusiasts, and recharged high churchmen. They were not happy with the tranquility achieved by the eighteenth-century Latitudinarian settlement of the church. There was dissatisfaction with certain key features of the

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[1]. John Henry Newman, The Via Media of the Anglican Church, Vol.2, (London: Longmans and Green, 1897), p.386.

Latitudinarian achievement. However, unlike the earlier High Church and Non-Juror reaction, this dissatisfaction crystallized into a set of intellectual critiques that proved to be fatal to the Latitudinarian trajectory.

First, Latitudinarianism was criticized for being too "dry". Its wholesale repudiation of the pietist movements of the eighteenth century was seen as a significant failure to appreciate the dynamic experiential dimension of spiritual life. The major religious movements of early nineteenth century, the Evangelicals, Tractarians, Methodists, Irvingites, the Liberal Anglicans, all concurred in affirming the importance of piety and religious experience. High Churchmen like Alexander Knox and Coleridgeans like F.D.Maurice hailed Methodism as a providential development in English religious history.[2] Major religious movements such as Tractarianism represented a "second phase" of the English revival in which pietism penetrated the

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[2]. Alexander Knox, The Remains of Alexander Knox, ed. Hornby, 4 vols., (London: J.Duncan and J.Cochran, 1834-1837). See his letters to Joseph Butterworth on Methodism, vol.1, pp.63-215. F.D.Maurice, The Kingdom of Christ, vol.1, (London: SCM, 1958, based on the 1842 ed.), pp.140f.

mainstream of the Anglican tradition.[3] Liberal anti-Tractarians such as Arnold were equally sympathetic with the pietism of nineteenth-century religious culture.[4]

Secondly, there was a growing recognition that its jurisprudence model of church lacked theological depth. In its definition of the church it failed to retrieve or re-appropriate those theological dimensions that were critical to the self-identity of the Christian tradition. The church question had been deliberately bracketed off from crucial theological concerns such as Christology, pneumatology, theology of revelation, atonement, and salvation. By the 1840s F.D.Maurice was arguing that this sweeping repudiation of any type of theological concept of the church was untenable.

> It seems to me, that whatever may be the temper or education of theological students, and thoughtful men generally, in this day, or to whatever point they mean to direct their studies, the questions - Is there a Catholic Church? what are its principles and constitution? - inevitably force themselves upon their attention, and in some sense

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[3]. Dieter Voll, Catholic Evangelicalism (London: Faith Press, 1963) and Y.Brilioth, The Anglican Revival (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1925).

[4]. Despite Arnold's hostility to Newman and the "Newmanites", he expressed appreciation for the thrust of Newman's comments in the passage quoted at the beginning of this passage, "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, (New York: D.Appleton, 1845), pp.236.

take precedence of all others.[5]

However, it was the work of the Tractarians in the 1830s who, successfully secured a reconstituted theological agenda in spite of considerable theological and ecclesiastical opposition. Given the lingering dominance of Latitudinarian ecclesiological paradigms in the academic and clerical establishment, their attempt to return to a theological speculation on the nature of the church as an "article of faith" was perceived to be a highly suspect movement of protest and dissent.[6] To refer to the church as an "article of faith", to speak of "Church authority, Tradition, the Rule of Faith, and the like", to argue that the doctrine of the church is at "the centre" of Christianity, violated basic attitudes towards the church that had become entrenched in the Anglican establishment.[7]

Thirdly, there was a growing concern about the

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5. F.D.Maurice, The Kingdom of Christ, vol.1, pp.11. Maurice recognized that this was a marked development. The eighteenth century jettisoned theological concepts of the church: "The great object which such an enlightened world should propose to itself, was the extinction of the idea of an ecclesia, in whatever shape that idea might express itself" (pp.140).

6. J.H.Newman, Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans, (London: Longmans and Green, 1897), vol.1, pp.34; Via Media, vol.2, pp.7-8.

7. J.H.Newman, Via Media, vol.2, pp.12, 14.

increasingly dominant role of political concerns in the life of the church. Newman argued that the flip side of desacralization of ecclesiology was the politicization of the church. Stripped of a theological grounding, the meaning and identity of the church must be derived from its political function. It becomes a "mere political religion".[8] Newman saw this as evident in the Latitudinarian character of English ecclesial life:

> We see in the English Church...nothing more or less than an Establishment, a department of Government, or a function or operation of the State, - without a substance, - a mere collection of officials, depending on and living in the supreme civil power. Its unity and personality are gone, and with them its power of exciting feelings of any kind. ...It is but one aspect of the State, or mode of civil governance; it is responsible for nothing ...[9]

Finally, the Latitudinarian strategy for promoting tolerance adopted a minimalist approach to the role of religious and moral values (doctrines) in the public realm. The strategy seemed to involve trade-offs that

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[8]. J.H.Newman, Via Media, vol.2 pp.10-12...John R.Griffin stresses the radical nature of Tractarian ecclesiology, The Oxford Movement: A Revision (Fort Koyal, Virginia: Christendom Publications, 1980). Griffin sees the essence of Tractarian radicalism as its anti-Erastian program and its critique of the identificatio' of the church with the upper classes. I doubt if this captures Newman's own sense of the uniqueness of the Tractarian option. It was radical because it was theological - it proposed a vision of the church as a divine institution radically distinct from the political community.

[9]. Certain Difficulties , vol.1, p.6

were far too severe and perhaps unnecessary. Coleridge and Arnold were particularly critical of the Latitudinarian view of church-state relations. They argued that it was built upon a truncated and de-moralized view of the role of the state. It lacked a moral and social vision with power to motivate and inspire selfless public action.

It is important to note that the growing recognition of Latitudinarianism's unsuccessful treatment of these questions did not emerge solely by reference to the problematics and concerns generated by Enlightenment social theory. To a significant extent it faltered due to its perceived failure to retrieve, appropriate, and develop substantive elements of the Christian tradition. This renewed sense of the importance of continuity with the Christian tradition of reflection and experience expressed itself in ecclesiology as the need to restore a "catholic" dimension in the nineteenth-century approach to the church.

The reasons for this interest in "restoration" are complex. On the theoretical level one might argue that it was natural and appropriate for the Latitudinarian trajectory in Christian theology to be questioned and examined on this crucial issue. On the political level

the massive impact of the French Revolution led to a much greater sensitivity to the fragility of traditions as well as the destructive ramifications of certain features of Enlightenment social and political thought for the Christian tradition. As a result the Enlightenment tradition was subjected to a hermeneutics of suspicion while pre-Enlightenment traditions were subjected to a hermeneutics of retrieval. Finally, the waves of eighteenth-century revivalism transformed English religious culture. Major pietist movements such as Methodism indicated a major shift in the "religious mind" of England.

These developments were so significant that by the 1830's the most effective spokesmen of eighteenht-century religious liberalism (Paley and Warburton) had become the most popular targets for theological critique and the most serious liabilities for their own tradition.[10] This is not to imply that there were not significant remnants of Latitudinarian liberalism that continued to write and pursue this line of discourse. The early nineteenth-century "Noetic school" in Oxford preserved and developed this trajectory. Richard

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10. On the early nineteenth century reaction against Paley see Boyd Hilton, The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp.4-5, 170-79.

Whately (1787-1863) edited Paley's works. Whately is commonly linked together with Edward Copleston (1776-1849), Edward Hawkins (1789-1882), and Renn Dickson Hampden (1793-1868) as main representatives of the Oriel or Noetic school of religious liberalism.[11] True to form, these theologians had a distaste for "religious parties" and theological controversy.[12] They did display a strong interest in liberal political economy. Whately and Copleston wrote a number of books and pamphlets in the discipline of political economy.[13]

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[11]. See Richard Brent's discussion of the Noetic School in Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion and Reform 1830-1841. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, especially chapter 4. Discussions of the Noetic school are also offered by Vernon F.Storr, The Development of English theology in the Nineteenth Century, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913), ch.6, and John Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century, (New York: Humanities Press, 1971 reprint), ch.2.

[12]. See Whately's The Use and Abuse of Party Feeling in Matters of Religion (Bampton Lectures, 1822) and Hampden's The Scholastic Philosophy Considered in its Relation to Christian Theology (Oxford: J.H.Parker, 1832).

[13]. Whately succeeded his former tutor and close friend, Nassau Senior, to the Chair of Political Economy at Oxford. Senior occupied the chair from 1825 to 1830. Whately held the Chair briefly from 1830-31. As Archbishop of Dublin, Whately established a chair in political economy at Trinity College in Dublin. The history of the Chair of Political Economy at Oxford illustrates the strange interaction between theology and political economy in early nineteenth century England. The Chair was established in 1825 by Henry Drummond, one of the leaders of the Irvingite movement, and a co-founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church. In

Their ideological perspective developed along lines largely unaffected by the fundamentally new questions and concerns generated in the religious and intellectual turmoil of the early nineteenth century. Richard Brent describes the Noetics as the "last English representatives" of the school of eighteenth-century English rationalistic theology.[14] This is not to say that the Noetic contributions to the discipline of ecclesiology do not merit attention. There were important ecclesiological modifications proposed by William Whately in his Letters on the Church (1826) and The Kingdom of Christ (1841).[15] Whately followed Warburton's general line of argument, however, the "alliance" approach proposed by Warburton was put aside in favour of a stricter Lockean separation between the

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1837 Frederick Denison Maurice, one of the outstanding Anglican theologians of the nineteenth century, was the favoured candidate to succeed Foster Lloyd to the Chair. However, he was defeated due to his heterodox views on infant baptism which, according to the victorious candidate Herman Merivale, "sealed his fate as a Political Economist"! See Hilton's discussion, The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865, pp.42-49.

[14]. Liberal Anglican Politics, pp.150. Brent states that,"the Noetics dug into the eighteenth-century seam of rationalistic Christianity, until, in the eyes of many, it became exhausted" (pp.157).

[15]. William Whately, Letters on the Church, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1837) and The Kingdom of Christ (London: B:Fellowes, 1841).

two jurisdictions.[16]

A.M.C.Waterman provides an interesting overview of this school of thought in "The Ideological Alliance of Political Economy and Christian Theology, 1798-1833".[17] However, Waterman's contention that this ideological position dominated Christian thinking in the nineteenth century is terribly misleading. Though this school does represent an important continuation of Paley's dialogue with the developing tradition of political economy, nevertheless, none of the major new schools of nineteenth-century English theology was sympathetic with this approach. The major revision of English religious liberalism fathered by Thomas Arnold was deeply critical of its traditional Latitudinarian

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16. See Whately's critique of the Alliance theory in section V of Letters on the Church.

17. Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 34(1983) pp.231-244. A more substantial discussion is offered by Hilton in The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865. Other studies in this area include: Peter Mandler, "Tories and Paupers: Christian Political Economy and the Making of the New Poor Law", The Historical Journal. 33 (1990) pp.81-103. Salim Rashid, "Richard Whately and Christian Political Economy at Oxford and Dublin" History of Political Economy, 13 (1981), pp.147-155; and J.M.Goldstrom, "Richard Whately and Political Economy in School Books, 1833-1880" Irish Historical Studies 15 (1966-67), pp.131-146.

approach to church, state, and economy.[18]

In fact, given the pervasive disenchantment with the Latitudinarian trajectory the tradition of religious liberalism temporarily lost its position of dominance and was forced to go through a very significant intellectual retooling in order to regain its place in the religious debates of the nineteenth century. Part of this retooling was accomplished through an engagement with and critical appropriation of elements of two major movements influencing English religious culture at the turn of the century which presented a direct challenge to Latitudinarian liberalism - pietism and romanticism.

The revisions of English religious liberalism that occurred during this period centered around the work of

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[18]. See Eugene L. Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold: A Study of His Religious and Political Writings (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1964). Despite Arnold's friendship with members of the Oriel School and his support for them in their conflicts with the Tractarian movement, nevertheless he took Whately and company to task for their flawed view of the nature of the church and its relation to the state (see Thomas Arnold, Introductory Lectures on Modern History, London: 1842, pp.35-36). Oriel liberals, such as Whately and Hawkins, had little sympathy for Arnold's approach. See Richard Brent's discussion of their differences in Liberal Anglican Politics, pp.178-180. (However, I fail to see to rationale for Brent's conclusion that the differences in outlook "mattered relatively little").

two main schools of thought.[19] The New Calvinist school (Erskine, Scott, and Campbell) emerged out of an early nineteenth-century pietist movement. Men like Erskine, Scott, and Campbell represented a new breed of religious liberalism. These men were born and bred in the stream of modern pietism. While Latitudinarians reacted adversely to any sign of religious enthusiasm, these men were comfortable with the realm of religious experience, spirituality, affectivity, interiority, and commitment. While Latitudinarians struggled to suppress disruptive theological controversy, these men threw themselves into theological debate. Their contributions, such as Campbell's The Nature of Atonement, were texts of lively theological interest. Their brand of liberalism was a marked development that bore little resemblance to the paradigm of their liberal predecessors.

Another early nineteenth-century school of liberalism was associated with the work of Thomas Arnold (1792-1842), Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868), Connop Thirwall (1795-1875), Julius Hare (1795-1855), and A.P.Stanley (1815-1881). This trajectory was deeply

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19. For a discussion of these two schools of thought see John Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century, chs. 1-3; Vernon Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, chs.6,7, 17-18; Bernard Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1970), chs.1-2, 12.

influenced by the romantic shift in English culture.[20] Arnold, the founding father of modern English liberalism, looked to Coleridge as his mentor. He drew heavily upon romantic insights into the nature of language, hermeneutics, history, and politics, in his attempt to demonstrate the inadequacy of Latitudinarianism and to forge and new trajectory of discourse on the nature of the church and its relationship to society and culture.

The following chapters will examine the dialogue of English liberalism with these movements during the first half the nineteenth century and the resulting revisions that were achieved within the liberal tradition that allowed it to reestablish its position of dominance in the English theological academy by the end of the nineteenth century.

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20. C.R.Sanders, Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement, (Durham, Kan.: Duke University Press, 1942); Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

CHAPTER VII

THE PIETIST CHALLENGE

The Latitudinarian fear of the disruption of liberal order through religious and doctrinal conflict led to an attempt to domesticate religious doctrine and control and minimize its impact on the public domain. This resulted in a certain impoverishment of theological discourse in the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century was not an era of architectonic theological work. Few outstanding contributions were made in the disciplines of Christology or ecclesiology. The only significant theological work seemed to be in the area of apologetics, the "evidence of Christianity" tradition in eighteenth-century thought.[1] Here we see an attempt to show that the Christianity ethos and Enlightenment perspectives on nature, man, morals, and society could be seen to mutually compliment and reinforce each other.

This restricted theological track-record stands in stark contrast to that of the following century. The

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[1]. There are numerous examples of this type of apologetical work such as Joseph Butler's Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed (1736) (London: MacMillan, 1900) and the works of William Paley, James Beattie, Sherlock, Bell, Layman, Porteus, Lyttleton, etc. compiled in The Compendium of the Evidence of Christianity (London, 1821), 6 vols. Unlike Paley and other 18th century apologetical writers, Butler proved to be a major force in 19th century religious thought, see Boyd Hilton's discussion of Butler's influence in The Age of Atonement, pp.170-183.

nineteenth century was marked by a renaissance in many theological disciplines such as Christology, ecclesiology, theology of revelation, eschatology, and biblical theology, as well as the emergence of new disciplines in theology such as social doctrine, theological anthropology, and historical theology. It was a period of intense theological ferment. The theological caution and timidity of Latitudinarianism was swept away by a new enthusiasm for and exploration of the realm of the religious. It was as if the grass-roots movements of revival in the eighteenth century had finally penetrated into the academy.

1. The Pietist Shift in English Religious Culture

> "We sacrifice too much to prudence; and, in fear of incurring the danger or the reproach of enthusiasm, too often we stifle the holiest impulses of the understanding and the heart." (Robert Southey)[2]

Southey's comment on "enthusiasm" marks an intellectual shift that took place in the nineteenth-century. Many major religious thinkers such as Coleridge, Newman, and Maurice attacked the very derogatory use of the term "enthusiasm" by Latitudinarians. The shift signalled the more

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[2]. Robert Southey, Colloquies on Society, (London, Cassell and Co., 1894, original ed. 1824), pp.81.

appreciative stance adopted by nineteenth-century religious thinkers to those pietistic movements within English religious culture which had been condemned as "enthusiastic". Tractarians and liberals, evangelicals and romantics, High, Low, and Broad Churchmen all welcomed and promoted a "religion of the heart." Theologically this entailed an acknowledgement of the importance of religious experience and an attempt to integrate the concept of religious experience into the agenda of Christian theology.

The accent on the centrality of religious experience was a contribution of pietist movements. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century liberals condemned this emphasis on the experiential as "enthusiasm". Enthusiasm was defined as a disordered, dangerous, and diseased form of religiosity. Henry More warned that "If ever Christianity will be exterminated, it will be by Enthusiasm".[3] Enthusiast patterns of religion were usually seen as clear evidence of serious psychological

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[3]. quoted from New English Dictionary, vol.3, (London: 1897), pp.215-216. See Michael Heyd, "The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth-Century", Religion, 15 (1985), pp.279-289; and George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt Against Enthusiasm", Seventeenth Century Contexts, (London: Faber & Faber, pp.202-239.

disorder - "the ungrounded fancies of man's brain".[4] Their internal feelings and inclinations become the "evidence" for their "groundless Opinion".[5]

For Latitudinarians and Deists "enthusiasm" was seen as the bête noire of a "reasonable Christianity". Locke in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding argues that enthusiasm is a deadly vice which undermines the pursuit of Truth. Enthusiasm seeks the "easier way" of "immediate Revelation" to establish an opinion rather than "the tedious and not always successful Labour of strict Reasoning".[6] Strong personal feeling and opinion are falsely equated with the Word of God:

> Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless Opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their Fancies, is an Illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine Authority: And whatsoever odd Action they find in themselves a strong Inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from Heaven, and must be obeyed...once they are got into this way of immediate Revelation; of Illumination without

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4. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 4.19.7, ed. by Peter Nidditch, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), pp.698. Locke states: "This I take to be properly Enthusiasm, which though founded neither on Reason, nor Divine Revelation, but rising from the Conceits of a warmed or over-weaning Brain, works yet, where it once gets a footing, more powerfully on the Persuasions and Actions of Men, than either of those two, or both together..." pp.699.

5. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp.699-700.

6. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp.698-99.

> search; and of certainty without Proof, and without Examination, 'tis a hard matter to get them out of it. Reason is lost upon them, they are above it...they feel the Hand of God moving within them, and the impulses of the Spirit, and cannot be mistaken in what they feel.[7]

Religious enthusiasm was perceived to be one of the most serious threats to the establishment and preservation of a rational and stable religious and social order.[8] Richard Graves wrote that

> as a true rational system of religion contributes to the happiness of society, and of every individual; so enthusiasm not only tends to the confusion of society, but to undermine the foundation of all religion, and to introduce, in the end, the skepticism of opinion, and licentiousness of practice.[9]

This Latitudinarian scorn for all forms of religious enthusiasm found a specific target with the emergence of Methodism. This influential expression of pietist spirituality in eighteenth-century England bore the brunt of Latitudinarian and Deist ridicule.[10]

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7. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp.698-700.

8. David Hume argued that "Enthusiasm produces the most cruel disorders in society". See his essay, "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm", The Philosophical Works of David Hume, eds. vol.III, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., pp.77-85.

9. Quoted from Albert Lyles, Methodism Mocked: The Satiric Reaction to Methodism in the Eighteenth Century (London: Epworth, 1960), pp.34.

10. Richard Green lists 606 anti-Methodist tracts in his Bibliography of Anti-Methodist Literature of the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1902). Examples of the

In contrast to the tone of Latitudinarianism, by the nineteenth century we see a widespread tendency to stress the more positive features of religious enthusiasm.[11] In Newman's study of St.Anthony of Egypt we find an example of this shift. Newman applauded patristic Catholicism for its "elastic and comprehensive character" in that it could embrace and creatively channel religious enthusiasm.[12] Patristic Catholicism, he argued, showed a tolerance for the diversity of

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critique of Methodism as "enthusiasm" are Theophilus Evans, The History of Modern Enthusiasm, from the Reformation to Present Times (London, 1757); Henry Fielding, A Fine Picture of Enthusiasm, (London, 1744); Thomas Green, A Dissertation on Enthusiasm, (London, 1755); Nathaniel Lancaster, Methodism Triumphant (London, 1767) and A Lash at Enthusiasm; Bishop George Lavington, The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd, (London, 1749). Albert M.Lyles provides a sympathetic analysis of this literature in Methodism Mocked: The Satiric Reaction to Methodism in the Eighteenth Century. See Gerald R.Cragg's remarks, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), pp.69ff. Ronald A.Knox contributes to this tradition of critique in his study Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950).

11. See the brief survey of the shifting sense of the term in the New English Dictionary, vol.3, (London: 1897, pp.215-216). The shift is analyzed in the work of Richard Brantley, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984) and Wordsworth's "Natural Methodism" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

12. "The Church of the Fathers", Essays and Sketches, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948), vol.3, pp.93.

religious experience and response that was not evident in middle-class liberal Protestantism.[13] Anthony was clearly an enthusiast, yet his biography indicates "how enthusiasm is sobered and refined by being submitted to the discipline of the Church".[14]

Newman admired Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, nevertheless, he did take strong exception to Locke's discussion of Enthusiasm in chapter 19 of Book four.[15] Newman complained that liberal Protestantism represented a "tyranny of those who will not let a man do anything out of the way without stamping him with the name of fanatic".[16] Liberal tolerance betrayed narrowness of vision entailed an "irrational bigotry" against the earnest expressions of religious faith.[17]

> the sensible protestant divine keeps to his point, hammering away on his own ideas, urging every one to be as every one else, and molding all minds upon his one small model; and when he has made his ground good to his own admiration, he finds that half his flock have after all turned Wesleyans or Independents, by way of searching for something

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13. ibid., pp.95-96.

14. ibid., pp.100.

15. John Henry Newman, A Grammar of Assent, (New York: Doubleday, 1955), pp.137-139.

16. "The Church of the Fathers", Essays and Sketches, vol.3, p.93.

17. ibid., pp.93.

divine and transcendental.[18]

Newman's point was well taken. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, while Latitudinarians were busy in the halls of academia and parliament, the English nation was going through a major religious revival. Methodists and Evangelicals were transforming English religious life from the bottom up. This revival was largely ignored by the establishment apart from the satirical tracts and sermons denouncing enthusiasm. However, by the beginning of the eighteenth century the wave of pietist revival had begun to overtake its confident detractors.

The impact of this revival on nineteenth-century English history has been documented by the classic study of Elie Halévy.[19] Halévy demonstrated that the tendency to see the nineteenth century as but one more critical step in the ongoing process of secularization is a historical bias that fundamentally misreads the evidence. In the nineteenth century the pietist movement penetrated and transformed English religious

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18. ibid., pp.94.

19. Elie Halévy, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, 6 vols., (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1961). E.S.Itzkin points out that Halévy's thesis continues to occupy a commanding position in historical scholarship today, "The Halévy Thesis - A Working Hypothesis?" Church History, 44(1975) pp.47-56.

life. Kitson Clark concurs with Halévy's basic thesis. Pointing to the pervading evangelical spirit of Victorian England he states that,

> In fact, it might not be too extravagant to say of the nineteenth century that probably in no other century, except the seventeenth and perhaps the twelfth, did the claims of religion occupy so large a part of the nation's life, or did men speaking in the name of religion contrive to exercise so much power.[20]

This revival of religiosity in Victorian England stood in contrast to the widespread perception of the "decay of religion" among the educated and middle classes of English society that marked religious culture during the eighteenth century. It marked a "change of heart".[21] Evangelical pietism had a pervasive influence on this change of heart in nineteenth-century English religious thought and spirituality.

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[20]. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp.20.

[21]. Elizabeth Jay (ed.), The Evangelical and Oxford Movements, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.1ff. The mood of despondency about "the general decay of religion" in 18th century England was quite striking. Joseph Butler stated that among the educated it was treated as "a principal subject of mirth and ridicule". (The Analogy of Religion, Preface to the first edition, London: MacMillan, 1900, pp.xvii). In 1721 Berkeley wrote that "In these wiser times, a cold indifference for the national religion, and indeed for all matters of faith and Divine worship, is thought good sense." (quoted from a footnote to Butler's preface to The Analogy of Religion pp.xvii)

2. Theological Dimensions of the Pietist Challenge

Pietism was a complex and multifaceted religious movement.[22] The various manifestations of Pietist spirituality must be interpreted in the light of established religious culture to which they were responding. The major expressions of eighteenth-century English pietism were Methodism and Evangelical

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[22]. Dale Brown provides a fine overview of the topic in Understanding Pietism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). His introductory chapter, "Pietism: What is It?", provides a general discussion of sources, historical expressions, theological motifs, and the main lines of interpretations of Pietism. The exemplar of Protestant Pietism is usually taken to be the German Lutheran tradition of pietism represented by figures such as Philip Jacob Spener, Arndt, August Hermann Francke, and Graf Nicholas Zinzendorf (see F.E.Stoeffler, German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century (Leiden, 1973), Martin Schmidt, Pietismus, (Stuttgart, 1972). However, F.E.Stoeffler contends that Pietism must be seen as "an inclusive concept" which identifies a "recognizable unity of thought, feeling, emphasis, expression, and purpose found within all experiential Protestantism". Accordingly, for Stoeffler, Pietism "constitutes a movement which, if seen in its full range, penetrated all of Protestantism during the 17th and 18th centuries" irrespective of geographical or denominational boundaries. F.E.Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1971). Furthermore, in opposition to mainstream scholarship, Stoeffler has argued that the origins of continental pietism can in fact be traced to the rise of Pietistic Puritanism in late 16th century and 17th century England. This stream of pietism that came into full expression with the impact of Methodism in the 18th century. The Methodist revival under Wesley was also paralleled by the Great Awakening in the United States in the 1740s. Stoeffler's claim for the impact of Pietism upon the Protestant tradition could be expanded to include the devotional and spi itual movements of 17th and 18th century Catholicism.

Anglicanism. The major opponents of this pietistic movement came from Latitudinarian and Deist circles.

Intentionally or unintentionally Methodism and evangelical Anglicanism presented a grass roots challenge to the enlightened rationalism of eighteenth-century liberal scholasticism. Latitudinarianism attempted to diffuse expressions of religious enthusiasm and fervour that would inevitably cause public discord and disrupt the delicate alliance of church and state. Pietism asserted the positive public role of religious enthusiasm, commitment and experience. Latitudinarianism attempted to nurture a fairly tranquil religious laity who were reasonable enough to see the futility of religious dissension and recognize that a personal faith in Christ was sufficient for salvation. Pietism called for an active, doctrinally committed, and involved laity. Latitudinarianism generated a minimalistic theology (adiaphoristic) which argued that there were only a few basic doctrinal essentials. In stressing this rationalistic theological minimalism it attempted to underline the authority of the state-church in controlling the so-called non-essentials (disputed doctrine, liturgy, church government). Pietism rejected this theological minimalism and insisted that the full gospel message must be lived out - a maximal

expression of Christianity. It restored the concern for "perfection" ir religious life.[23] Finally, whereas eighteenth-century religious liberalism stressed a reasonable accommodation to and alliance with existing political and cultural patterns, pietism stressed a new asceticism - a Christian confrontation with the way of the world. It called for the renewal and reconstruction of Christian family life, missionary work, religious education, religious institutions, and parochial life. Pietism attempted to provide effective ways for maintaining and promoting a distinctively Christian presence in the industrializing societies of Europe and North America. Martin Schmidt argues that this is "the really crucial point" in determining the significance of movements such as Methodism. Here, for the first time in modern Church history, it was argued that the fundamental position or task of the Churches in relation to the cultures, peoples, and institutions of Christendom was to be defined as the missionary conversion or transformation of modern culture rather

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23. Leo George Cox, John Wesley's Concept of Pertection, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964). In evangelical Anglicanism see the position defended by W.Wilberforce, "On the prevailing inadequate Conceptions concerning the Nature and Strictness of Practical Christianity", ch.4, A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians (London: T.Cadell, 1829).

than "establishment" or "alliance".[24] This fundamental shift in perspective would affect the ecclesiological reflection of nineteenth-century Liberal Anglicans, Broad Churchmen, Evangelicals, and Tractarians.

This kind of agenda may seem to run against some of the major schools of thought in the Enlightenment. However it would be wrong to interpret the pietist movement as a anti-rational rebellion against or withdrawal from the concerns of the Enlightenment. By the second half of the eighteenth century it was evident that a significant cross-fertilization was taking place between Enlightenment schools of thought and pietist movements.[25] I would like to focus on some core theological concerns that emerge out of this interaction.[26]

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24. Martin Schmidt, "Wesley's Place in Church History", in The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition, (Metuchen, N.J.: Sacrecrow Press, 1976), pp.88-90.

25. Stoeffler, German Pietism, pp.253ff.; Peter C.Erb (ed.), Pietists, (New York: Paulist, 1983), pp.24-5. Bernard Semmel's study The Methodist Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1973) rejects the traditional thesis of the reactionary nature of 18th century pietism. He contends that Methodism had a constructive relationship to modernity and the Enlightenment (see chapter 1).

26. Dale Brown provides a framework for an analysis of the main theological motifs which characterized this pietist protest: Understanding Pietism, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). See also Stoeffler's studies, P. Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology (New York: Harper

A. A Theology of Experience

Within Pietism there is a tremendous emphasis on the centrality of religious experience. This is expressed in the wide variety of pietist movements in the 18th and 19th centuries (Evangelical revivalism, Methodism, Irvingism, Tractarianism, etc.). However, this focus on the diverse manifestations of spiritual experience was not as significant theologically as the connection which pietism made between doctrine and experience. J.Clifford Hindley argues that the work of John Wesley offered one of the first major attempts to incorporate the questions and concerns surrounding the problem of religious experience into the field of theology. His essay, "The Philosophy of Enthusiasm: A Study in the Origins of Experimental Theology", contends that Wesley offered a new theological methodology that attempted to cull out the experiential ground for religious beliefs.[27]

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and Row, 1967), ch.1; Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972) vol.1, ch.2; K.Barth, Protestant Thought from Rousseau to Ritschl, (New York: Harper, 1959), Part I "Background".

27. J.Clifford Hindley, "The Philosophy of Enthusiasm: A Study in the Origins of Experimental Theology", The London Quarterly and Holborn Review 182 (1957) pp.99-109, 199-210. Hindley's thesis is explored in some depth in R.E.Brantley's study, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism. Brantley argues for an interesting line of development linking

Doctrines are conceived of as intellectual articulations of core religious experiences (e.g. justification, salvation, sanctification). According to pietists such as Wesley if you scratch at a key religious doctrine underneath you will find a core religious experience. Doctrines are more than just truths to be grasped. Since they articulate realities which can be encountered and experienced, therefore, to use Newman's terminology, in religious matters one seeks a "real assent" rather than a purely "notional" one - an assent which implies contact with a religious "reality".[28] Wilberforce states that we must "feel their power in the affections and their transforming influence in the heart".[29] Wilberforce insists on the critical importance of this "doctrine of contact" - that religious truths must be personally experienced and

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Wesley and the "rational empiricism" of Locke (chs. 1 & 2). Arthur Nagler in Pietism and Methodism (Nashville, Tenn., 1918) also argued that this method of "religious empiricism" was the critical contribution made by these movements (pp.176).

28. An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent, ed. I.T.Kerr, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), Part I, ch.4.

29. William Wilberforce, A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes...Contrasted with Real Christianity (London: T.Cadell, 1829), pp.52.

appropriated.[30] "It is not sufficient to assent to the doctrine we must also feel it."[31] There must be an "interpenetration" of the mind and the reality in human experience.[32]

This accent on the experiential often led to a dismissal of the pietist contribution as little more than popular religious devotionalism devoid of real theological significance.[33] However, more recently there has been greater attention to the novel theological method implicit in the contributions of pietists such as Wesley. Wesley developed a theological variant of the "rational empiricism" of Locke.[34] His epistemological skepticism and empiricism is Lockean. Wesley, like Locke, rejected the concept of

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30. ibid., pp.85-6.

31. ibid., pp.41.

32. R.E.Brantley, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism, pp.14ff.

33. See F.Dreyer's brief review of the critiques levelled at Methodism by E.P.Thompson, Leslie Stephen, William Lecky, and Luke Tyerman, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", American Historical Review, 88(1983), pp.12-13.

34. Wesley's appreciation for Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding began in his student years and continued throughout his life. He recommended the Essay "as suitable reading for devout Methodists" and had extracts of the text published in the Arminian Magazine - F.Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", pp.21; R.E.Brantley, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism, chs.2 & 3.

innate abstract concepts. The data of subjective religious experience must also be subject to rational reflection and analysis. Key theological doctrines of Christian faith, such as sin, salvation, sanctification, and assurance, can and should be read through the lens of experience. They are not abstract theological ideas but subjective experiences which are "felt" and, therefore, known by the believer.

Wesley reworks the concept of faith to fit his theological revision of Lockean epistemology. Locke underlined the critical role of experience for all human knowing in his famous tabula rasa image of the mind:

> Let us suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: - How comes it to be furnished?...Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from Experience. In that all our knowledge is founded and from that it ultimately derives itself.[35]

This experience is available to us in two ways: 1) sensation or sensory experience, 2) reflective introspection: the "internal sense".[36] Just as Hutcheson extended the Lockean argument into moral theory by arguing for the existence of a "moral sense", Wesley, following Peter Browne, extended the Lockean

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35. John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed.by Maurice Cranston, (New York: Collier, 1965), II,1, pp.61.

36. ibid., II,1, pp.61-2.

approach into theology by arguing for the existence of a "spiritual sense".[37] Both argue that we must presume the existence of such senses if we can speak of moral or spiritual knowledge since all knowledge is grounded in experience.[38]

According to Browne and Wesley faith is a faculty of spiritual sense which allows us to experience spiritual realities in some way. Faith, for Wesley, is not an "assent" to objective religious truth, but a "faculty" of "spiritual sense", analogous in the religious realm to Hutcheson's "moral sense", and which allows the believer to "feel", to experience, and thus, to know theological truths.[39] Hindley refers to this as Wesley's "doctrine of the spiritual sense", a doctrine which attempted to provide a view of Evangelical faith sensitive to the Enlightenment empiricist trajectory in epistemology.[40] Brantley quotes Wesley's most explicit definition of this

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37. For Wesley's heavy dependence on Peter Browne's work, The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding (1728) (reprint - New York: Garland Publishing, 1978) see Brantley, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism, pp.30ff.

38. ibid., pp.30ff.

39. F.Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", pp.26-7.

40. Hindley, "The Philosophy of Enthusiasm: A Study in the Origins of Experimental Theology" pp.202.

doctrine found in "An Earnest Appeal":

> You know...that before it is possible for you to form a true judgement of the things of God, it is absolutely necessary that you have a clear apprehension of them, and that your ideas thereof be all fixed, distinct, and determinate. And seeing our ideas are not innate, but must all originally come from our senses, it is certainly necessary that you have senses capable of discerning objects of this kind - not those only which are called "natural senses", which in this respect profit nothing, as being altogether incapable of discerning objects of a spiritual kind, but spiritual senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil...
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> And till you have these internal senses, till the eyes of your understanding are opened, you can have no apprehension of divine things, no idea of them at all. Not consequently, till then, can you either judge truly or reason justly concerning them, seeing your reason has no ground whereon to stand, no materials to work upon.[41]

Faith, as spiritual knowledge, is analogous to our knowledge of the natural world. It must be grounded in the subjective experience of facts. Faith, Wesley states,

> is with regard to the spiritual world what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.[42]

All of this may seem to be a crude form of

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[41]. Brantley, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism, pp.48; see John Wesley, The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters, ed.G.R.Cragg, vol.11, The Works of John Wesley, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp.56-7.

[42]. John Wesley, The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters, ed.G.R.Cragg, pp.46.

pietistic epistemology that would lead to unfortunate consequences for any revision of theology. However, even with Wesley there is an attempt to avoid an uncritical understanding of epistemological significance of religious experience. For Wesley, as for Locke, experience is internal or subjective. All experiences are subjective responses to external realities. Natural knowledge is grounded on the sensory experience of the external world (sight, smell, sound, touch, taste) and our introspective experience of ourselves. Moral knowledge is based on our moral sense experiences (feelings of approbation, sympathy, benevolence, guilt, outrage) of moral and immoral human acts. Similarly, spiritual knowledge is based on our spiritual experience. These experiences are affective experiences or feelings in the life of the believer such as love, joy, peace, zeal, etc. Thus the epistemology of religious knowledge is linked to a psychology of religious life, a passional analysis of religious personality.[43] Affective religious experience can be a basis for knowledge insofar as we presume that our internal experiences are not purely

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[43]. Brantley, Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism, pp.44; see J.Collins' discussion of "passional analysis of religion" in his study The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp.29f.

subjective but are a response to stimulation by realities which exist "out there" and which we are encountering.

Wesley describes these spiritual experiences as distinctively Christian experiences - the "inward fruits of the Spirit".[44] There is no hint of a philosophy of generic human religious experience. According to Wesley, faith, the "spiritual sense", is a new faculty which is the product of "regeneration" in Christ.[45] It is distinctively Christian rather than generically human.[46] Using a traditional Biblical reference (Gal.5:21) Wesley lists these inward effects as love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, etc. Such effects, though subjective, are nevertheless personally real and experienced. Wesley insists, that these important criteria of Christian experience (or grace) are real subjective experiences - they "are inwardly felt or they have no being".[47] Wesley is stating that if we have

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44. This paragraph and the quotes from Wesley are based on Dreyer's essay, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", pp.16ff.

45. ibid., pp.46-48.

46. An example of a theory of faith which stresses it subjective affective content but which also underlines its generically human character is found in the work of W.C.Smith.

47. Wesley, The Letters of Rev. John Wesley, ed. John Telford, 8 vols, (London, 1931), 2:64; 1:20.

such affective spiritual experiences they should be immediately present to us in the same way as we are immediately conscious of any real experience. If we find ourselves trying to argue for their presence in us then we are like a blind man trying to argue that he really does see. "Surely these graces are not of so little force, as that we can't perceive whether we have them or no; and if we dwell with Christ...certainly we must be sensible of it."[48] Wesley drives home this point in "The Witness of the Spirit" in which he responds to the question of how one is to discern the presence of the grace in one's life:

> I would ask him...How does it appear to you, that you are alive, and that you are now in ease, and not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness, you will know if your soul is alive to God...By the same means you cannot but perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God.[49]

These dynamic spiritual affections are the internal evidence of the experience of external spiritual realities. The specific "faculty" which enables us to appropriate this matrix of spiritual experiences is Christian faith.

If theological empiricism is to be rational it must subject spiritual experience to some sort of critical

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[48]. Wesley, Letters, 4:332.

[49]. Wesley, Works, 5:114.

analysis. Despite the fact that Wesley was branded as an enthusiast during the eighteenth century further study has led to the conclusion that Wesley was an astute and critical observer of human religious psychology. His journals and letters demonstrate his deliberate and studious documentation of cases.[50] His religious psychology of the dynamics of Christian spiritual experience is informed by two sources. First, he looks to scripture for an authoritative evidence as to the nature of authentic Christian spiritual experience. Secondly, he looks to the accumulated evidence of his extensive documentation of religious behaviour and psychology - a sort of psychological sensus fidelium. On the basis of these loci, a psychological profile of New Testament and contemporary Christian experience, Wesley can dismiss certain forms of experience as aberrant and untrustworthy while other forms of experience can be validated as authentically Christian psychological states.[51]

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[50]. Lewis Curtis writes that in Wesley's work "we find an empiricist and inductive approach collecting and collating case histories analyzing the complex phenomena surrounding the second birth"...He was a practical experimentalist...a one-eyed William James...the pangs of second birth attracted him as forcefully as the phenomena of trade attracted Adam Smith". Anglican Moods in the 18th Century (New Haven: Archon Books, 1966), pp.69-71.

[51]. ibid. pp.69-71.

This new theological empiricism led to a new theological synthesis which had an ambiguous relation to previous Protestant syntheses such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, or Arminianism. Frederick Dreyer points out that various attempts to interpret Wesley's contribution in the light of one of the classic Protestant traditions have proved to be inadequate.[52] Albert Outler's depiction of Wesley as a "folk-theologian", "an eclectic who had mastered the secret of plastic synthesis", only serves to underline the fact that judged by traditional theological categories Wesley's thought seems incoherent.[53] Dreyer points out that until Wesley's contributions are judged in the light of Enlightenment debates this sense of incoherence in his theology will

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52. Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", pp.28. Franz Hildebrandt's, From Luther to Wesley, (London, 1951) and Martin Schmidt, John Wesley: A Theological Biography, 2 vols, (Nashville, Tenn., Abingdon Press, 1972-3) provide Lutheran interpretations; John Newton, Methodism and the Puritans (London, 1964) and Robert C. Monk, John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage, (Nashville, Tenn., Abingdon, 1966) focus on Wesley's Calvinism; Bernard Semmel, The Methodist Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1973) and George C.Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935) stress Wesley's Arminianism.

53. See Dreyer's remarks, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", pp.28. The reference from Outler is taken from John Wesley, (New York, 1964) pp.119-120.

persist.[54] Wesley was grappling with a new problematic - the grounding of theological categories in human religious experience. In grappling with this problematic Wesley was forced to depart from classical Protestant theological approaches and launch into a line of reflection that owes more to theorists such as John Locke and Peter Browne than to theologians such as Luther, Calvin, or Arminius.

The Methodist and Evangelical Anglican approach to the question of religious experience proved to be successful insofar as it raised a central problematic, the question of religious experience, which could no longer be systematically ignored. It responded to that problem on a practical level but also on a theoretical level. Wesley, building on Peter Browne, offered a creative adaptation of Lockean empiricism. By adopting such a strategy Wesley, the "true believer", implicitly acknowledged the fact that the topic of religious experience could only be successfully integrated into the tradition of Christian theology through theoretical

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54. "A theory may be coherently conceived and yet seem confused and self-contradictory when we make it answer questions it was never intended to address. In the case of Methodism, the question to be asked concerns not Wesley's theology but his epistemology. We are dealing here with a man of the eighteenth century and not the sixteenth. His intellectual outlook is formed not by the Reformation but by the Enlightenment." "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley", pp.29.

approaches sensitive to the epistemological concerns of Enlightenment thought.

Latitudinarianism did not have the theological resources or lacked the creativity to recognize the importance of and to tackle this major religious issue and theological problem. Scholars are forced to turn to the enthusiasts such as Wesley rather than academic authorities such as Warburton for significant contributions to a theory of religious experience in the eighteenth century. The Latitudinarian assault on pietism through satire and ridicule only betrayed the poverty of its own intellectual response tc this problematic.

B. Biblical Theology and Christology

Pietism was a revival movement insistent on the restoration of Christian faith and practice. The popular climate of spiritual revival led to a concern for the restoration and revival of the classical Christian theological concerns. This "return to theology" was something new. It represented the emergence of a strong epistemological interest in revival, restoration, and appropriation of Christian religious beliefs. The return to theology was a

striking feature of nineteenth-century ecclesiology. The jurisprudential attempt to detach ecclesiology from any essential relation to the critical doctrines of the Christian tradition came to be seen as inadequate and self-defeating. One of the striking features of the renaissance of ecclesiology in the nineteenth-century was the attempt to relate questions about the nature of the church to the wider theological agenda of the Christian tradition such as Christology, pneumatology, and biblical theology.

The primary form for pietist theology was Biblical theology. Paul Tillich observes that "wherever biblical theology prevails over systematic theology, that is almost always due to the influence of Pietism." [55] However, Pietism advocated a particular style of biblical theology. It was a "kergymatic" approach which underlined the fact that the primary telos of the word is spiritual transformation rather than the provision of doctrinal information.[56] It accented experience both in terms of the methodology of scripture study and the actual content of the biblical texts.

First, Scripture was to be studied with the goal of

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55. Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought, (New York, Harper and Row, 1968), pp.285.

56. W.Wilberforce makes this familiar evangelical point in A Practical View, pp.68-70, 269-270.

personally encountering and appropriating the truths of scripture. For Protestant pietists scripture was the devotional centre of their experiential faith and they developed numerous practical techniques for the study and appropriation of scripture (scripture study groups, scripture guides, reference texts, translations of scripture into vernacular, teaching of biblical languages). Scripture was a pathway to personal experience therefore every effort was made to put the believer in touch with the full message of scripture.

Secondly, the content of scripture was seen as the unique depository of authentic apostolic Christian experience. Scripture was perceived to be a cluster of authoritative religious experiences which were preserved in an authoritative canon. These experiences were seen to be available to the believer because he shares in the same spirit which generated these experiences in the first place. The goal of biblical theology was to uncover the living throbbing experiential dimension behind the letter.[57]

Pietism underlined the importance of the focus on religious experience for biblical theology. The theological appropriation of scripture is linked to the full experience of the life expressed in scripture. The

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57. W.Wilberforce, A Practical View, pp.50-53.

mind of the exegete must be transformed. There can be regenerate and unregenerate theology.[58] E.B.Pusey's analysis of the exegetical approach proposed by Semler, Spener, and Ernesti highlights this feature of the Pietist contribution:

> For it is obvious that if scripture is to be understood from itself, those only can rightly and fully understand it who have a mind kindred to that of its author; as any human production, upon which the mind of its author is impressed, will be best understood by him, whose intellectual and moral character is most allied to the original which it expresses. The individual is thus placed, as it were, at the centre of the same circle, from which the views of the author emanated, and contemplates therefore every part in the same order, harmony, and relation, of which they were originally possessed. In religious writings it is plain that the spirit required is a religious spirit; that none can truly understand St.Paul or St.John, whose mind has not been brought into harmony with theirs, has not been elevated and purified by the same spirit with which they were filled: and this, unquestionably, was what the pious Spener meant by his much disputed assertion, that none but the regenerate could understand Holy Scripture.[59]

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58. Tillich characterizes the issue in these words: "There was a debate on what was called the "theologia irregenetorum", the theology of the unregenerate, of those who are not born again. Orthodoxy maintained the view that since theology is an objective science, it is possible to write a fully valid theology whether we are reborn or not. Pietism said, "No, that's impossible; you must be reborn with respect to everything in which you participate, in all that you talk about; you can be a theologian only if you have the experience of regeneration". Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, ed. Carl Braaten, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp.16.

59. E.B.Pusey, A Historical Enquiry into the Probable Causes of Rationalist Character Lately Predominant in the Theology of Germany, vol.1, (London:

This position was clearly influential in the thinking of Tractarians such as Pusey, Newman, Keble, and Williams. The "doctrine of reserve", that the Christian mysteries should be handled and promulgated with care and reserve, was a development of this pietist emphasis on the need for theological interpretation to be grounded in mature spiritual experience.

Latitudinarianism promoted the academic study of scripture for the sake of personal edification and to dispel non-biblical doctrinalism. However, the intensity of the pietist approach to Scripture with the emphasis on encounter, experience, and personal transformation left Latitudinarian scholars such as Warburton completely bewildered. Warburton had nothing but scorn for Wesley's bibliomancy.[60] However, he also had little to offer in terms of a significant development of biblical hermeneutics. Nineteenth-century liberals such as Thomas Arnold would inaugurate a new era for biblical studies. However, they would find little of value in the Latitudinarian approach to scripture.

In pietism effective hermeneutics was linked to the

Rivington, 1828), pp.26-27.

60. See Brantley's remarks on Warburton's anti-Wesley tract, The Doctrine of Grace, in Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism, pp.233.

question of regeneration. Pietism generated a new concern for Christology, the incarnation, regeneration in Christ. Latitudinarianism had restricted and impoverished rather than expanded the horizons of Christological speculation. The tradition argued for a strict Biblical minimalism. Locke's simple Messianism, Hampden's attack on post-Biblical developments, the general repudiation of later theological developments in Christology as corruptions of Greek thought, left few doors open for a deepening of philosophical or theological speculation in the area of Christology. Pietism re-awakened theological interest. But in doing so it also re-directed that interest. The Christological discourses of the nineteenth century would be shaped by a new set of concerns.

Pietism was Jesus-centered. Its devotionality focussed on the life and person of Jesus. It was particularly interested in the actual life experiences and personality of Christ. The 18th and 19th centuries was the age of biographies on Christ.[61] This quest for the living historical Christ, his "life and times", the personality of Jesus, is a typically pietist approach to

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[61]. Biography in the pietist tradition is a major vehicle for teaching. Life-experience exemplifies theological truths. The inspirational testimony, the personal life-story, is one of the basic literary forms of pietist religious traditions.

the person of Christ. Christology shifted from metaphysical speculation about the ontological nature of Christ to biography - the attempt to recover the spirit and experience of the Christ-event. Christology came to be viewed as primarily a study of the experience and life story of Christ. As the life and historic experience of Christ was clarified and understood it shed light on possibilities open to all believers.

Pietists stressed the fact that Christ became incarnate - that Christ entered fully into the realm of human experience and that therefore his experience is available to us. Incarnational theology was revived and re-emphasized in the nineteenth century. Edward Irving, an influential early nineteenth-century Presbyterian theologian, typified this new emphasis in his insistence that in Christ God enters into "actual participation" with the experience of mankind.[62] The incarnation was a kenosis, a self-emptying of God into the human experience. Christ "came into the limitation of the knowledge, feelings, and complete nature of man," he experienced his humanness "such as manhood is experienced by us to be".[63] Irving went so far as to

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62. Edward Irving, The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened, in Collected Works, (London: 1865), vol.5, pp.152.

63. Edward Irving, Prophetical Writings, vol.1 (London, 1867), pp.13, 345.

argue that Christ, in the incarnation, took on an "unregenerate human nature", a human nature marred by original sin, thus completely identifying with man-as-he-is.[64]

Contemporary theologians emphasize this close link between Christology and anthropology. If God in Christ fully entered into the human condition therefore the study of man must reveal fundamental things about God and conversely the study of Christ shed insight into the mystery of man. Martin Schmidt argues that these kinds of links were forged in the pietist movement.[65] The Christ event was not simply an act of incarnation and atonement by which God saves humankind from damnation. Pietists posited a more organic link between the Christ-experience and human existence. They rejected the traditional forensic theology of imputed righteousness in Calvinism and Lutheranism. The death of Christ was not simply a juridical act which altered the "status" of the sinner in relation to God and bestowed on him or her an "imputed" righteousness. The Christological event

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64. This doctrine led to the expulsion of Irving from the Church of Scotland. Karl Barth was sympathetic with Irving's position. See Donald Baillie's discussion of Irving and Barth in God was in Christ: an Essay on Incarnation and Atonement, (London: Faber and Faber, 1955), pp.16f.

65. Dale Brown, Understanding Pietism, pp.36-7.

was perceived to speak to the very inner character of human existence in its relationship to God.

This renewed appreciation of the importance of the great theological questions (e.g. the nature of scripture and revelation, Christology, etc.) created a new imperative for nineteenth-century ecclesiology. No major school, conservative or liberal, could effectively dodge the task of the theological "restoration" of ecclesiology. Trajectories, such as the Oriel school, which chose to ignore or reject the theological tradition of Christianity proved to be a dead end within the evolution of the liberal tradition. Those schools of thought which attempted to retrieve and redeem the theological resources of the tradition carried liberalism forward.

However, the pietist contribution to the revival of theological discourse had a particular type of slant. There was an insistence on the need to interpret the agenda of Christian theology in the light of an experiential, personal, and practical style of Christian life. This would influence developments in the doctrine of the Church.

C. Doctrine of the Church and the World

Pietism has been subject to a longstanding critique for an over-emphasis on individualism which tended to subvert adherence to ecclesial life.[66] Pietist movements did, at times, stress the personal journey to a degree that seemed to undermine the possibility of any meaningful ecclesiological vision. Nevertheless, pietism did generate important ecclesiological insights and the nineteenth-century renaissance of ecclesiology in Protestant and Catholic circles cannot be properly understood apart from the pietist backdrop.

Eighteenth-century pietism presented a relatively confused amalgam of ecclesiological perspectives on church governance, authority, and institutionality.[67] However, as Albert Outler points out, it did attempt to open up new ecclesiological ground in its emphasis on the functional attunement of ecclesiological patterns to "holiness of heart and life".[68]

In accenting the note of "holiness" pietism restored the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to a unique place of importance in ecclesiology. The pietist

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66. ibid., pp.35 ff.

67. Albert C. Outler, "Do Methodists have a Doctrine of the Church?" in The Doctrine of the Church, ed. Dow Kirkpatrick, (New York: Abingdon, 1964), pp.11-28.

68. ibid., pp.24ff.

theology of experience involved a re-appreciation of the "work of the spirit" in human experience.[69] Personal religious experience was perceived to be a function of the pneumatic or spiritual presence of God in the life of the believer. Pietists affirmed that it is only to the extent that we are open and responsive to the "gracious operations of the Holy spirit" that we can truly "know experimentally" the divine.[70] Christianity is not only a "description" of authentic spiritual life it is also an "experience" of that life. Wesley's famous tract, "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity", explores this twofold dimension of the Christian gospel. He concludes section two stating:

> So Christianity tells me and so I find it. May every real Christian say, "I now am assured that these things are so; I experienced them in my own breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised, is accomplished in my soul."[71]

In pietism ecclesiology was firmly grounded in pneumatology. The Church was perceived to be the manifestation of the life of the spirit among believers rather than a juridical or institutional entity. Its

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69. Wilberforce draws attention to the critical significance of the "work of the Spirit" in the life of the Christian, A Practical View, Ch.3, sect.1.

70. Dale Brown, Understanding Pietism, pp.102.

71. Albert Outler (ed.), John Wesley, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.191.

fundamental concerns were not law, office, order, but the nurturing of a full Christian life experience. Thus, pietism shifted the attention of ecclesiological from the juridical to the social and spiritual expression of Christian life. Methodism was interested in the discovery of practical "patterns of life", "rules", or "disciplines", which would govern the daily life of the individual and the community and order it to the goals of love, service, mission, devotion and sanctification.[72] William Law provided a description of the patterns of life adopted by the early Oxford Methodists that gathered around Wesley:

> That this society think themselves obliged in all particulars to live up to the law of the gospel. That the Rule they have set themselves is not that of their own inventions but the Holy Scriptures, and the orders and injunctions of the Church, and that not as they perversely construe and misinterpret them, but as they find them in the holy canon. That, pursuant to these, they have resolved to observe with strictness not only all the duties of the Christian religion according to their baptismal engagements, but the fasts, the prayers, and sacraments of the Church; to receive the blessed Communion as often as there is opportunity; and to do all the good they can, in visiting the sick, the poor, the prisoners, etc., knowing these to be the great articles on which they are to be tried at the last day...These are the Rules, this the Method, they have chosen to

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72. Gerald O. McCulloh, "The Discipline of Life in Early Methodism..." in The Doctrine of the Church, ed. by Dow Kirkpatrick, (New York: Abingdon, 1964), pp.161-181.

live by.[73]

Methodists were committed to a rigorous discipline of prayer (personal, familial, and public), scripture study, sacramental communion, fasting, and attendance in the regular meetings of the community.[74]

Wesley wrote that the goal of these disciplines is first of all to achieve spiritual transformation - "a constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer".[75]

In a sense these spiritual disciplines were seen as far more critical to the life of the church than ecclesiological doctrines and structures. Methodism may have had a muddled ecclesiology of the institutional life of the church, however, it had a highly developed ecclesiological perspective on the order necessary for the cultivation of spiritual life. The order included not only a set of practical disciplines but an order of governance to ensure the implementation of these disciplines. Methodist governance was primarily

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73. quoted from McCulloh, "The Discipline of Life in Early Methodism..." pp.166-7.

74. ibid., pp.172.

75. quoted from Gerald McCulloh, "The Discipline of Life in Early Methodism...", pp.167.

pastoral governance and care over the daily spiritual lives of individuals and families. It was a hands-on "house to house" governance of the daily spiritual life of the community.[76] The central function of the Methodist bishop, elder, preacher, and class leader was to cultivate and oversee these disciplines in the lives of the believers. In practice this meant that Methodist governance was much more keenly felt in the daily life of the average Methodist than would be the case for the average eighteenth-century Anglican.[77]

Wesley classified his disciplines and pastoral structures into two categories: the "instituted" and the "prudential".[78] The language used here has a distinctly "jurisprudential" ring to it. Latitudinarianism did have some influence on Wesley's concept of church order and administration.[79] After his study of Lord King's An Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity and Worship of the Primitive Church Wesley concluded "that neither Christ nor his apostles

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76. ibid., pp.176ff.

77. ibid., pp.170-171.

78. ibid., pp.172.

79. Frederick Hunter, John Wesley and the Coming Comprehensive Church (London: Epworth, 1968), pp.87ff.; Albert Outler, "Do Methodists have a Doctrine of the Church?" pp.15 and John Wesley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.306.

prescribed any particular form of church government, and that the plea for the divine right of the Episcopacy was never heard in the Primitive Church."[80]

However, despite some formal similarities in the ecclesiological language that Wesley employed there were major differences in substance. Wesley's "instituted" forms, those ecclesial structures established by scripture, were far more extensive than those recognized by Latitudinarian thought. They fleshed out a biblically-based ascetical pattern. These devotional "rules", such as prayer, fasting, and frequent communion were far more imposing for the daily life of the believer than anything proposed by the minimalist Latitudinarian interpretation of ecclesiological "fundamentals".

Wesley's "prudential" forms also proved to have a radically different focus and content. Wesley had a well-deserved reputation as a genius for ecclesiastical adaptation and improvisation.[81] He agreed with the

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80. Quoted from Clarence Bence, "Salvation and the Church: The Ecclesiology of John Wesley", pp.308, in The Church: An Inquiry into Ecclesiology from a Biblical Theological Perspective, (Anderson, Ind.: Warner Press, 1984), ed. by Melvin E. Dieter and Daniel N.Berg.

81. Gordon Rupp, "Son of Samuel: John Wesley, Church of England Man" in The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition (Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press, 1976), pp.57-8.

Latitudinarian view that church institutional structures were flexible and open to revision.

> Scripture, in most points, gives only general rules; and leaves the particular circumstances to be adjusted by the common sense of mankind.[82]

However, Christian holiness, not ecclesiastical tranquility and civil order, was the goal of the prudential structuring of church life. Ecclesiology was geared to the total pattern of life of the Christian in a way radically different from jurisprudence ecclesiology. His vibrant ecclesiological experimentalism was explicitly geared to fulfil the imperative to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you were called."[83]

> It should always be remembered that the word "walk", in the language of the apostle, is of a very extensive signification. It includes all our inward and outward motions, all our thoughts and words and actions. It takes in not only everything we do but everything we either speak or think. It is, therefore, no small thing "to walk", in this sense of the word, "worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called"; to think, speak, and act, in every instance, in a manner worthy of our Christian calling.[84]

For Wesley, as for many nineteenth-century ecclesiologists such as Moehler, Newman, Lacordaire,

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82. Quoted from Clarence Bence, "Salvation and the Church: The Ecclesiology of John Wesley", pp.308.

83. Albert Outler (ed.), John Wesley, "Of the Church", (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.314.

84. ibid., pp.314.

Maurice, and Schleiermacher, a particularly theological concern, the embodiment of the mark or note of holiness, became the touchstone for a renewed ecclesiology.

Prudential forms were geared more to the recreation of an effective Christian "culture" than the effective administration of offices and institutions. Ecclesial forms were evolved to create an ecclesial culture or a Christian social environment which would be effective in nurturing exemplary Christian life ("holiness") from cradle to grave.[85] Ecclesiology must nurture spiritual socialization and transformation of human character - the creation of "genuine Christianity" and "genuine Christians".[86]

Thus, for Wesley the "prudential forms" of the church were geared to "practical" Christianity rather than juridical institutional order. This concept of "practical Christianity" was a profoundly weighted concept in evangelical and pietistic circles. "Practical" had a wide circle of meanings: real, everyday, living, etc. It implied a real shift of focus from doctrine and institutions to the patterns of life which express the Christian ethos in concrete ways

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85. ibid., pp.314-317.

86. Albert Outler (ed.), John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity", (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.183-196.

in personal, familial, and societal circles. Albert Outler states that "Wesley's understanding of the church was that it is an act, a function a mission, in the world than a form and institution".[87]

These new Pietist accents in ecclesiology also opened the door to a more acute sense of the role of Christianity in historical culture. According to Dale Brown Pietism laid the foundations for a theological tradition known as Heilsgeschichte or salvation history.[88] This concept emphasized two interrelated insights: first, that salvation is a historical event - that it unfolds within the full context of human historical experience; secondly, that human history is capable of being a vehicle for divine action. Accordingly, the jurisprudence attempt to restrict the impact of religion upon the social and political world was dismissed as wrong-headed. Within a relatively short time after the eighteenth-century fervour of revival evangelicals set about forging new models Christian service in politics, commerce, and professional life.

Nineteenth-century evangelicals argued that

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87. A.Outler, "Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?", pp.19.

88. Dale Brown, Understanding Pietism, pp.130.

Christian commitment and holiness must permeate all dimensions of life. The careers and writings of prominent evangelical Anglicans such as Hannah More, William Wilberforce, and Lord Salisbury symbolized this call for penetration of a distinctly Christian style into the established orders of English society. In her writings Hannah More attempted to present the pietist protest to the cultured elites of England. William Wilberforce and Lord Salisbury provided concrete models of how to live out evangelical ideals in the social, political, and familial life of the Anglican establishment.[89]

Wilberforce is a good example of an emerging pietist consciousness of the Christianization of modern political economy and culture. Wilberforce rejects the Paley's Latitudinarian contention that the expansion of religiosity undermines the effective working of liberal social order.[90] The Latitudinarian attempt to restrict the sphere of religion was not compatible with the evangelical pietist sense of religion as a whole way of life affecting the whole man. Wilberforce argues that

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89. Wilberforce's popular work A Practical View attempts a confident and urbane presentation of the pietist challenge to the literate English religious and cultural establishment.

90. William Wilberforce, A Practical View..., pp.301-2.

the Latitudinarian concept that "the greatest part of human actions is considered as indifferent" represents a "fundamental error". The dynamic spirit of religion is "crippled and hemmed in".[91] It leads to a "system of decent selfishness".[92] Pietists looked for a more forceful and dynamic intepenetration of religion and culture. No ecclesiologist of the nineteenth century could afford to ignore this shift of concerns.

3. Conclusion

Pietist motifs had a major impact on the theological scene. They raised a new set of questions and concerns that had a permanent influence on nineteenth-century theological debate:

1. The question of the nature of religious experience and the epistemological focus on experience.
2. The re-reading of traditional theological categories such as scripture, christology, or pneumatology in the light of a theology of religious experience.
3. The dialectic of religious experience and ecclesial order.
4. The question of the nature of history and its relation to ecclesial existence.[93]

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91. ibid., pp.131.

92. ibid., pp.134.

93. See the concluding discussion of F.D. Maurice's contribution to this debate in the author's essay "Transcendence and Community; Millenarian and Irvingite Elements in Maurice's Theology", by Daniel Cere, in Community and Critique in Nineteenth-Century Theology,

This is not to say that there was widespread consensus on how these issues were to be resolved. In fact, the Pietist tradition broke down at a very early stage into two distinct theological trajectories: a liberal school of pietism which attempted to promote a fundamental reinterpretation and reconstruction of Christian doctrine in the light of the universal common core elements of all human religious experience and a confessional tradition which assented to the basic features of traditional Christian doctrine but sought an experiential appropriation of the content of those doctrines. Ecclesiologically, liberals abandoned jurisprudence models and searched for a more substantive connection between ecclesiology and human experience - a "comprehensive" or "broad" church which dynamically related to lived experience.[94] Religious liberals divided over the question of whether the reformed church should be envisaged as a non-institutional voluntary fusion of like-minded believers or whether there was a need for the development of a more full-fledged theology of church and state.

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ed. Charles Davis, (Montreal: ICES Research Report, 1980), pp.54-72, esp. pp.68.

[94]. C.R.Sanders, Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement (Durham, Kan., 1942); see his discussion of the origin and use of the term "broad church", pp.7-16.

Ecclesiological conservatives looked for a "Catholicism" which nurtured spirituality and holiness rather than static conformity. The ecclesiologies of Newman, Ward, Froude, and Irving, were a "radical" and evangelical brand of conservatism.[95] Within conservative circles there were alternate strategies proposed. Irvingites argued for the necessity of a re-founding of Catholic Church polity based on a renewed appreciation of the intimate dialectic between institutional order and religious experience. Tractarians argued for the actualization of the experiential potential of existing ecclesial forms.

However, these diverse movements of restoration did not submerge the critical Enlightenment questions concerning doctrine, history, institutionality, tolerance, and pluralism. It was the permanent accomplishment of the jurisprudence tradition to have raised these questions and brought them to bear forcefully upon the discipline of ecclesiology. However, there were two major difficulties with the jurisprudence paradigm in ecclesiology. First, it integrated the concerns of Enlightenment natural jurisprudence at the expense of marked divergence of its

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95. John R. Griffin, The Oxford Movement: A Revision (Fort Royal, Virginia: Christendom Publications, 1980).

ecclesiological discourse from the distinctly "theological" character of the tradition of Christian discourse on the nature of the Church since the patristic period. It became evident that its contribution was too exclusively rooted in the parochial concerns of Enlightenment social theory and insufficiently responsive to the broader agenda of discourse achieved within the Christian tradition of theological discourse on the nature of the Church. It was in need of correction on this score. Pietism was successful in generating a disposition for theological restoration of ecclesiology. Secondly, Pietism contributed to this movement of restoration while raising up a new and profoundly critical question for the agenda of Christian theology, the question of religious experience. Latitudinarians ignored this achievement and because of this the school was left stranded in the world of eighteenth-century debates while a new breed of liberal set out to grapple with a new age of theological debate.

CHAPTER VIII

PIETISM, LIBERALISM AND ECCLESIOLOGY

It is one thing to acknowledge a general influence of pietism on English religious thought. A far more demanding task is to attempt to specify the ways in which pietist concerns penetrated into early nineteenth-century English theological debate. English Pietism underwent a series of transformations during the first half of the nineteenth century. The major vehicles of pietism such as Methodism and Anglican Evangelicalism were losing momentum and new forms of pietism were emerging. Tractarianism provided a High Church expression of pietist spirituality. But Tractarianism was not the only example of an appropriation and development of pietism in early nineteenth-century English religious thought. While contemporary scholarly interest tends to focus on the significance of the Tractarian development, nineteenth-century studies in historical theology tended to give equal weight to the theological and spiritual impact of the Irvingite and New Calvinist movements.[1]

Between 1826 and 1830 a pietist-pentecostal

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[1]. Compare the treatments of these topics in Tulloch's Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century (1885) and that of Bernard Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore: A Century of Religious Thought in England, (London: Longman, 1971)

revival movement, the Irvingite movement, emerged into prominence on the Scottish and English scenes.[2] The movement was sparked by the appearance of out-of-the-ordinary experiential phenomena among some members of John McCleod Campbell's congregation in Row - manifestations of the "gifts of the spirit" enumerated in the Pauline epistles (tongues, prophecy, healing, etc.).[3] During the 1830s the Irvingite movement received national attention as striking and controversial expression of the wave of pietist spirituality that was penetrating English religious culture. The movement drew together a diverse group of Presbyterian and Episcopalian religious thinkers - Edward Irving, Thomas Erskine, John Mcleod Campbell,

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2. The Irvingite movement receives little attention today however it was a significant factor in the religious culture of the period. It became a topic of national attention. Major religious theorists refer to it and some such as Coleridge and F.D.Maurice claimed to be influenced by Irving's theological contribution. Today study of the movement is restricted largely to students of Pentecostalism who see Irvingism as a unique antecedent to the pentecostal movements which emerged out of the American Holiness tradition at the turn of this century. (e.g. John T.Nichol, The Pentecostals, (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos, 1971), pp.18-24.

3. E.Irving, "Facts Connected with Recent Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts", Fraser's Magazine, Jan.1832, vol.4, and vol.5, March & April, 1832; M.O.W.Oliphant, The Life of Edward Irving, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), vol.2, pp.102-108; The Letters of Thomas Erskine, ed. W.Hanna (Edinburgh: waugh & Innes, 1878), vol.1, ch.7.; Thomas Erskine, The Supernatural Gifts of the Spirit, (Philidelphia, 1883).

A.J.Scott, Henry Drummond. F.D.Maurice referred to this group as the "New Calvinist" school.[4] By the end of 1833 a serious internal schism arose concerning the ecclesial direction of the New Calvinist movement. The movement had fragmented into two distinct trajectories. One headed by Irving, John Cardale, and Henry Drummond attempted to generate a reconstituted Catholicism out of their pietist roots. It was a synthesis that deeply impressed and influenced the work of F.D.Maurice.[5] Newman expressed some sympathy for the ecclesiological thrust of the Irvingite movement. However, he contended that the creation of a new High Church option was largely redundant.[6]

The other trajectory was headed by Erskine, Scott, and Campbell. It attempted to revise liberalism on the basis of a dialogue with and appropriation of critical aspects of the pietist movement. The Erskine trajectory had strong similarities to the Schleiermachian revision of liberalism in Germany. Newman noted the analogies

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4. F.D.Maurice, The Kingdom of Christ, vol.1, (London: SCM, 1958), pp.152.

5. See my discussion of the impact of Irvingism on Maurice's theology, in "Transcendence and Community: Millenarian and Irvingite Elements in Maurice's Theology", pp.62-65.

6. See his comments on Irvingism in his fictional work Loss and Gain, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891) pp.389-395.

and focussed on Erskine as a target for his analysis and critique of early nineteenth-century developments in religious liberalism.[7]

The internal theological fragmentation of this pietist movement indicates the pervasive impact of the movement upon quite distinct ecclesiological trajectories. Nineteenth-century ecclesiology was drawn into a dialogue with the concerns of pietism. Liberal and confessional ecclesiological reflection was forced to develop a response to the pietist agenda. In the Irvingite movement we find a conservative confessionalist stream of pietism which moved quickly to forge a new High Church ecclesiology as well as a new church (the Catholic Apostolic Church) to embody that ecclesiology.

I. Irvingite Ecclesiology and High Church Pietism

In a series of dramatic trials during the years 1831-32 the Church of Scotland purged the key Presbyterian representatives of the New Calvinist school from the Presbyterian Church. Irving, Campbell, and Scott suddenly found themselves at the head of a

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7. J.H.Newman, "On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion", in Tracts for the Times, vol.3, no.73, (New York, A.M.S. Press, 1969, reprint).

religious and theological movement which had been severed from any connection with an ecclesiastical community.[8]

Edward Irving (1792-1834), the movement's most prominent national leader, began to push forcibly towards a reconstituted ecclesial polity as the corporate expression of the newly discovered experiential dimension of Christianity. He attempted to wed the pietist motifs of experience, subjectivity, and pneumatology to the more traditional ecclesial concerns for order, institutionality, and authority. F.D.Maurice claimed that Erskine, Scott, and Campbell neither appreciated nor understood the value of Irving's insights into the theology of ecclesial community.[9] Scott acknowledged his lack of sympathy with Irving's theology in this area. He claimed that Irving "had from the first a strength of ecclesiastical, I may say hierarchical, feeling, impossible with my convictions."[10] Irving's ecclesiological orientation

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[8]. Andrew L. Drummond, Edward Irving and His Circle, (London: J.Clarke, 1936); Henry C.Whitley, Blinded Eagle: An Introduction to the Life and Teaching of Edward Irving (London: S.C.M., 1955).

[9]. F.Maurice (ed.), The Life of F.D.Maurice Chiefly Told in His Own Letters, (London: MacMillan, 1884), vol.2, pp.403-404.

[10]. Quoted from The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.1, pp.205.

appears to have been formed in part by his exposure to traditions of ecclesiological discourse in Anglicanism and Puritanism. Irving was a devoted student of Hooker, a theologian who epitomized the tradition of civility, i.e., respect for the critical function of institutional order and rule, in Anglican thought.[11] This influence would appear to have been reinforced, as Erskine points out, by the impact of converts from the High Church of England who were prominent figures in the ecclesiological development of the Irvingite movement.

A second line of influence emerges out of Irving's reading of the Puritan tradition. Irving criticizes certain dimensions of the Puritan theory of church polity. His critique of John Knox is indicative of the movement of his thought. He argues that the tradition of ecclesiological reflection in Puritanism built itself around concepts of "legality" and "social compact". However his critique involves a reinterpretation of the political texture of church rather than a repudiation of it. The Puritan vision of a theocratic political order was a vision which Irving shared. However the political articulation of this vision must go beyond the language of jurisprudence and come to grips with the Pauline

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[11]. M.O.Oliphant, The Life of Edward Irving, vol.1, pp.31.

accent on the role of the Spirit and anointed spiritual leadership in formation of an ecclesial body. Irving argues that the problem with Knox's ecclesiology is that

> it makes the supremacy to stand in a book, and not in a person, and diverteth the ordinance from the ordinance-administrator and from the ordinance-head. It is by persons, not by truths, that God is glorified; and persons, not truths, doth he ordain for the government of his creatures.[12]

A narrow focus on "rules" and "legal arrangements" as the ground of all institutional order leads to a "destruction of all social relations".[13] It blinds us from recognizing the living matrix of ordered social relations between believers and the critical role of anointed leadership.

The Irvingite theory of ecclesial authority is marked by three distinct features. First, it is "paternalistic" in the technical sense of the term. Authority should embody a wisdom which oversees, cares for and nurtures the needs of the community in a more effective way than would be the case of autonomous individual decision-making. Secondly, this paternalism is personalistic rather than bureaucratic or institutional. Headship and submission relations are

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12. Edward Irving, Confessions of Faith, (London, 1831), pp.cxxix.

13. Edward Irving, Confessions of Faith, (London, 1831), pp.cxxx, cxlvi.

personal relations rather than institutional or bureaucratic ones. Irving emphasizes the critical role of personality in ecclesial life:

> I would restore the dignity and responsibility of the persons, in order that the confederacy [of churches] may regain its end of charity and promotion of unity. Wherever the persons merge their personality in the combination, it is the combination of slaves.[14]

Authority for Irving is not primarily a legal or institutional arrangement but a committed social relationship between persons. Authority is a mutual relationship of anointed pastoral headship on the one hand and voluntary subordination on the other. Authority must be characterized by "personality" rather than institutionality. Irving complains that the institutional confederation of local churches in presbyterial government blurs the experience of personal responsibility and headship. He argues that these personal patterns of headship and subordination are at the heart of communal life in the church, as well as family, and civil society.[15]

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14. The Prophetical Works of Edward Irving, ed. G.Carlyle (London: Alexander Strahan, 1867), vol.1, pp.292.

15. This accent on the critical function of the headship/submission relationship for communal life was developed by later theorists within the Irvingite tradition. One of the leading figures in the movement, Henry Drummond, explores the order of headship and submission in his text Social Duties on Christian

Thirdly, authorities are divinely anointed rather than institutionally selected. Irving's concept of hierarchy is an "enthusiast" one. Ecclesial leaders emerge out of the charismatic life of the community. Thus, for example, shortly after Irving's death the highest offices (the "Apostles") of the Catholic Apostolic Church were established through "prophecy" during prayer assemblies.

The theory of ecclesial authority proposed by Irving and developed by Henry Drummond has a distinctly traditional ring to it. Their conclusions reflect the tradition of "patriarchalism" in English political thought.[16] The most prominent spokesman for this trajectory of political theory was Filmer, Locke's great antagonist in his Second Treatise on Goverrment.

Principles (London, 1839). The text is a lengthy commentary on Ephesians 5. It sees this pattern of personal headship and personal submission as essential to true union and fellowship. In developing this theme it also stresses the "patriarchal" nature of all authority. It is interesting to note that in American evangelical circles one of the contemporary best-sellers on Christian family life, Larry Christensen's The Christian Family (Minn.: Bethany Fellowship 1970), is essentially a "paraphrase" of an Irvingite text by H.W.Thiersch on the nature of the Christian family. The Irvingite theology of headship and submission has permeated conservative evangelical thinking on the question of marriage and family.

16. Gordon J. Schochet, Patriarchalism in Political Thought, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975); James Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

This tradition of political thought had its proponents throughout the eighteenth century. Wesleyans were very sympathetic to the patriarchal argument for authority.[17] We find this strand of English political theory forcefully resurrected in Irvingite ecclesiology. Classic patriarchal doctrines, such as "passive obedience", the hierarchical nature of society, the patriarchal nature of kingship, and the divine right of kings are fully reaffirmed in Irvingite theology.[18]

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17. J.A.Gunn, Beyond Liberty and Property, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill - Queens University Press, 1983), pp.170. A considerable segment of Gunn's text is devoted to the study of the persistence of High Tory political theory in the 18th century (pp.120-193).

18. Henry Drummond, Social Duties on Christian Principles (London, 1839): on passive obedience (pp.165), the hierarchical nature of society (pp.165, 175-7), the patriarchal nature of authority (pp.178-9), the divine right of kings (pp.172-3).

It should be noted that this Irvingite reconstruction of ecclesiology on the basis of patriarchal theory is most appropriately attributed to the work of the High Tory Irvingite ecclesiologists such as Henry Drummond and John Cardale. Irving's most creative theological work focussed on the development of a kenotic theory of Christology. Responsibility for the development of a systematic theological discourse on the question of church tended to fall to Drummond. However, during the late 1820's Irving produced a body of ecclesiological writings which reflected the intellectual influence of his friendship and dialogue with S.T.Coleridge. Irving's discussion of "the counterbalancing principle in the constitution of the Church" with his strong stress on the charismatic authority of the "people" (The Prophetical Works, vol.1, pp.244-51, 287-298) indicates the influence of Coleridge's civic humanist theory of church (see chapter nine of this thesis).

The basic manifesto of the Catholic Apostolic Church, Testimony Addressed to the Rulers in Church and State, lays out a sweeping patriarchal liberal political and ecclesiastical theory.[19]

However, Irvingism submits patriachalism to a distinctly pietist reinterpretation. In Irving and Drummond we find a pietist argument for a reappropriation rather than a repudiation of the political dimension of ecclesial existence. The Irvingites called for a re-reading and reconstitution of the dimensions of ecclesial authority and rule in the light of the pietist concern for the personal and experiential character of Christian life.[20] They effected this re-reading by moving the role of the

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19. Testimony Addressed to the Rulers in Church and State, (1837). The text begins with an assessment of the apocalyptic effects of the victory of liberalism resulting in "the removing of all ancient landmarks, the breaking up of all ordinances of life, the decay of reverence in all those set over them in the Lord, in children for their parents, in servants for their masters, in subjects for those in authority over them...lastly, that open and unblushing avowal by the infidel and revolutionist of their fixed determination to complete the work which the revolutions of the last century left unfinished, by the disorganization of all ancient principles, moral, religious, or political, and by the destruction of all established institutions in Church and State; and to establish a new era of atheist anarchy, under the name of liberalism, on the ruins of the Christian Faith and of the governments at present existing".(pp.5)

20. Testimony Addressed to the Rulers in Church and State, pp.22-30.

Spirit to centre-stage in their analysis of ecclesial life.[21] Irving argued that the pentecostal charismatic "manifestations" of the movement were more than spontaneous discrete events expressed through individuals. They pointed to a pneumatological order in ecclesial life. Life in the spirit has a distinct ecclesial order and form. It gives birth to living patterns of authority, institutionality and rule in the community. The experiential and pneumatic dimension of the Church ushers in a "visible church" with political texture.[22] The authoritative offices of the church such as "apostle" and "prophet" were charismatic ministries.

Shortly after Irving's death (1834) there emerged, under the leadership of Henry Drummond and John Cardale, a concrete embodiment of Irving's ecclesiology in the Catholic Apostolic Church - a church steeped in Pietist spirituality yet highly sacramental, hierarchical, patriarchal, and institutional.[23] Its basic

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21. Testimony Addressed to Rulers in Church and State, pp.62f.

22. Prophetical Works, vol.1, pp.289-290.

23. P.E.Shaw, The Catholic Apostolic Church, (New York: King's Crown, 1946), E.Miller, The History and Doctrines of Irvingism, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, 1878). A brief overview of the history of this denomination is provided by Kenneth W. Stevenson in "The Catholic Apostolic Church - Its History and its

ecclesiological model was that of "Church as Mystical Body". The foundation of Church is grounded in the pentecost event:

> The consequence of that event was the formation of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ - a Body newly-created in Him, quickened with His life by the operation of the Holy Ghost...It is the office of the Holy Ghost to dispose and establish all things in their proper place, to elevate the due order in which all are to co-operate, to bring each individual into action in his proper relation to every other, and to inspire and energize them severally and distinctly to fulfill their respective functions.[24]

The attempt to merge the "catholic" appreciation of sacred order, hierarchy, and authority with the pietist concern for the experiential led to a theology of the Church as "Mystical Body" which was, in many ways, an interesting analogue to the fusion of the political and the experiential in the Roman Catholic teaching during the twentieth century.[25]

Eucharist", Studia Liturgica 13 (1979), pp.21-45.

[24]. John Cardale, Readings Upon the Liturgy and Other Divine Offices of the Church, (London: Bosworth, 1874), vol.2, pp.148, 398 (a liturgical text for the Catholic Apostolic Church).

[25]. Pius XII; E.Mersch, The Whole Christ (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938); The Theology of the Mystical Body (St.Louis: B.Herder, 1951); S.Tromp, Corpus Christi Quod Est Ecclesia, 4 vols, (Rome: Gregorian University, 1937-1972). Tromp is said to be the primary writer for Pius XII's encyclical on the mystical body; see J.Robert Diorm's discussion of the debates surrounding this issue in The Papacy and the Church, (New York: Philosophy Library, 1987) pp.195-236.

This odd ecclesial movement may seem to be of antiquarian interest only. However, it does illustrate four fairly important points. First, we see that the pietism was amenable to "Catholic" ecclesiological reconstruction. Secondly, this reconstruction, accenting pietist concerns, represented a new theological development that broke with traditional High Church ecclesiologies. Third, the High Church appropriation of pietist concerns proved to be a successful combination. Resurrected "catholic" movements re-directed and spearheaded a new pietist revival in the 1830s. The birth and rapid growth of these new High Church movements, such as Irvingism and Tractarianism, surprised and disturbed those whose roots were in the developing tradition of English religious liberalism. Fourthly, High Church movements which refused to engage the major critical questions posed by Enlightenment social and political theory tended ineluctably to be marginalized from the mainstream of intellectual debate over the nature of the church.[26]

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[26]. Generally, sectarian marginalization is a deliberately adopted strategy. This appears to be the case with the Irvingite movement. Irving's repudiation of Latitudinarian doctrines of "treaty" or "coalition" between church and state was grounded on a more sweeping condemnation of what he calls the "Arminian heresy", the attempt "to bring the church and the world into a good understanding with one another" (pp.vii-viii). See his loaded polemic against liberal religion in his

This was certainly the case with the Irvingite movement. Despite the recognized theological and ecclesiological creativity of men like Edward Irving, Henry Drummond and John Cardale their attempt to reconstruct ecclesiology on the basis of a pietist reappropriation of High Tory patriarchal political theory effectively closed the door to a serious treatment of the critical questions posed by Enlightenment theory. The ecclesiological confusions and inadequacies which Newman noted in the High Church reaction to Latitudinarianism at the beginning of the eighteenth century resurface in Irvingite patriarchal ecclesiology. In his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine Newman argued that "one cause of corruption in religion is refusal to follow the course of doctrine as it moves on, and an obstinacy in the notions of the past".[27] The High Church sectarianism of the Irvingite movement may have generated a fascinating and imaginative ecclesiological revival of Filmerian theory, however, it did not constitute a meaningful conservative "response" to the Enlightenment.

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introduction to his translation of The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty by Juan Josophat Ben-Ezra [pseud. for Manuel Lacunza), (London: L.B.Seeley, 1827).

27. J.H.Newman, Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, pp.120.

2. The Liberal Appropriation of the Pietist Protest:

However, there is another story woven into the Irvingite revival. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the longstanding antipathy of liberal religion to pietist spirituality is overcome and religious liberalism begins a significant dialogue with and appropriation of pietist insights.[28] Thomas Erskine (1788-1870), Alexander Scott (d.1866), and John McCleod Campbell (1800-1872) were key figures in the liberal redirection of pietist spirituality. Erskine and Scott were associated with the Irvingite movement in its early stages, however, as the movement headed in a "Catholic" ecclesial direction they parted company with it and spearheaded a liberal alternative. Erskine and Scott felt that as Irving moved into a closer alliance with Drummond's theological vision he was betraying the more innovative thrust of his own theological and ecclesiological convictions.[29]

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28. See Brian Gerrish, Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the 19th Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), especially "The Protest of Grace: John McCleod Campbell on the Atonement", pp.71-98. This liberal appropriation of Pietism is also strongly evident in English Roman Catholic Circles. Chinnici's fine study of the Cisalpine school illustrates this line of development: The English Catholic Enlightenment (Shepherstown: Patmos, 1980).

29. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.1, pp.205.

Like Irving, Erskine argued that Christianity is not simply a doctrinal "system" but is primarily a subjective personal orientation. He develops this pietist accent when he underlines the experiential dimension of religious faith. He insists that Christianity is living, experiential, and personal. We are called,

> to experience it all, subjectively, in ourselves, through the operation of the Spirit of Christ, received into our hearts by faith.[30]

Here we see a typical pietist protest against reified patterns of Christian experience which lack true personal appropriation.[31] Authentic Christianity must be characterized by "right relationship", not simply right belief. For Erskine "blind submission to authority" (doctrinal or institutional) involves a "deeper deception".[32] This reified form of faith is grounded in a refusal to enter into a real personal appropriation of the Gospel message.[33] By appropriating the gospel on this false basis the believer is in effect

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30. Thomas Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, (London: James Duncan, 1838), pp.xviii.

31. B.A.Gerrish, Tradition and the Modern World, ch.4, "The Protest of Grace", (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

32. Thomas Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, pp.xiv.

33. Thomas Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, pp.513-514.

"subverting its principles".[34] Erskine was offering a version of Rahner's "cryptogamic heresy" -adherence to an objective confessional stance without authentic interior disposition places the believer existentially, if not doctrinally, in a heretical stance.[35]

For Erskine what is theologically significant in this pietist protest is the link-up established between the question of religious experience and the question of religious knowledge. Doctrines can be validated on the basis of an appeal to "religious experience", as well as revelation or philosophy. Erskine's religious empiricism targets the soft empiricism of the world of subjective experience rather that hard empiricism of the world of the "brute fact". The turn to experience is bound up with a "critical turn to the subject" in nineteenth-century religious liberalism. It is evident in the impact of Schleiermacher and Kant in Germany as well as the work of Reformed and Anglican liberalism in England.[36] Otto Pfleiderer argues that this entailed an important theological shift - a movement away from supernaturalism to an appreciation of the subjective existential character of religious faith. Referring to

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34. Thomas Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, pp.xiv.

35. B.A.Gerrish, Tradition and the Modern World, pp.75.

36. Gerrish, Tradition and the Modern World, pp.95.

the work of the New Calvinist liberals he states that,

> This is manifestly the same reconstruction of the Christian doctrine of salvation which was effected by Kant and Schleiermacher in Germany, whereby it is converted from forensic externality into ethical inwardness and a truth of direct religious experience".[37]

Pietism did ground its theology in the subjective and the experiential. However, in general it remained on a conservative track in its analysis of doctrine and in its sense of the distinctively supernatural character of Christian religious experience. It tended to define the relevant religious experience as that which was specifically and expressly Christian.

The attempt to point to a more universal and less restrictive type of human religious experience begins with the tradition of religious liberalism. Liberals argued that the distinction between the secular and the profane was arbitrary. A link is now forged between the pietist protest and the liberal insistence on the need to humanize religion and relate it to the basic contours of natural human experience. All authentic dimensions of human experience are expressions of religious experience.

This collapse, or integration, of the distinctly

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37. Otto Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant and Its Progress in Great Britain Since 1825, (London: Swan Sonnenchein, 1893), pp.382.

religious or Christian into the authentically human meant that traditional Christian doctrines could not be simply retrieved as they were in confessional pietism, rather they would have to be radically reinterpreted and reconstructed. This more anthropocentric approach to religious experience now entailed a significant internal transformation of the content of traditional Christian doctrine.

The liberal appropriation of the pietist accent on experience is effected in such a way that it carefully disengages it from any form of "supernaturalism". John Mcleod Campbell explains that the experience of the transcendent is "an actual consciousness in yourselves" rather than an experience of some external supernatural reality.[38] Erskine underlines the distinction between the personalist accent of religious liberalism and the supernaturalism of traditional theology. He distinguishes "natural religion" from "conventional religion". Conventional religion is "a religion adopted on external authority without any living consciousness within our hearts corresponding to it".[39] Natural religion, on the other hand, is

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38. J.M.Campbell, Sermons and Lectures, vol.1, (Greenock: R.B.Lusk, 1832) pp.36.

39. Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, pp.495.

> a religion which has a real root in our nature, so that the doctrines of it are believed, not merely, or chiefly, on any outward authority whatever, nor on any process of reasoning whatever, but on the authority of an inward consciousness".[40]

The reality which is the focus of theological reflection is immanent human reality:

> a thing which has a direct reference to myself, and can only be known to me by my apprehending it in its direct reference to myself... the thing to be believed can only be known by personal experience. The law burdens my conscience only in consequence of its personal reference to myself, and the gospel can only purge my conscience by a reference to myself equally personal".[41]

Erskine argues that the traditional pietist dichotomy between profane human experience and Christian experience is a false one:

> Every movement towards the extension of man's faculties and capacities is in itself good... Religion should be a sap flowing through the branches of man's life consecrating the whole of the products... Life is not divided into religious and secular parts".[42]

The data for theological insight consists of all authentically personal and human experience.

We see this approach at work in nineteenth-century liberal reconstructions of Christology. Martin Schmidt argues that the underlying principle of all forms of

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40. T.Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, pp.493.

41. Thomas Erskine, The Brazen Serpent, (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1831), p.31-32.

42. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.2, pp.195.

pietistic theology is the centrality of the biological metaphor of regeneration in the analysis of the relationship of Christ and the believer.[43] The pietist approach to regeneration emphasizes the living experiential relationship between Christ and the believer.

In traditional pietistic circles Christology explores the supernatural transformation of human nature through the experience of Christ. Confessional pietists while stressing the experiential component continue to stress the objectivity of Christological doctrine and the distinctiveness of the specifically Christian nature of religious experience in contrast to common human experience. In liberal pietism this distinction is jettisoned. Christology becomes theological anthropology writ large. Liberal Pietists such as Erskine argue that Christology is a symbol of the possibilities of human religious experience rather than a set of objective truths about a specific historical figure. Christology highlights the transcendent dimensions immanent within human nature.[44] The traditional Christological patterns (incarnation,

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[43]. see Dale Brown discussion, Understanding Pietism, pp.36-7.

[44]. T.Erskine, The Doctrine of Election, p.20.

atonement, redemption, resurrection) are experiential possibilities. Furthermore they argue that these possibilities are not specific to Christian believers but dimensions of all authentic human experience.[45]

This concept of the immanence of the religious in human experience allowed liberalism to make a more sweeping appropriation of the orthodox theological vocabulary of the major Christian traditions. Supernatural doctrines were naturalized and subjectivized. They were employed as clues, hints, and insights in the exploration of the religious consciousness of human nature and society - rather than certitudes about supernatural realities distinct from human history and experience. Even traditional ecclesiological vocabulary dealing with catholicity, apostolicity, and holiness which had been ignored, down-played, or disparaged in Latitudinarianism could now be reclaimed and reinterpreted. Liberalism found a new

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45. "Each individual man is a little world in which that whole history which took place in Judea 1800 years ago is continually reproduced" Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.2, pp.336; "The Gospel history is the consciousness I find within me expressed outwardly. It is only by finding a oneness that I can understand the history, and the history makes me understand my own consciousness. The history of Jesus Christ, what he sorrowed and suffered, is a perfect outward manifestation of what will go on imperfectly in every man's heart now." Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.2, pp.356.

avenue to speak directly to the sensitive theological concerns of the various traditions and develop rather than compromise its own core principles. In the face of the tide of religious revival it could reclaim the pulpit. Its revised, more universal, Christology would provide the theological backdrop for a renewed exploration of the connections between ecclesiology and human sociality.[46]

3. New Calvinist Ecclesiology:

The ecclesiological contributions of the New Calvinist school were set against the foil of the Irvingite movement. The New Calvinists were deeply critical of the re-politicization of religious life.[47] They complained to Irving that this shift involved "the entire annihilation... of all true personal spiritual religion or conscious communion with God".[48]

However, Erskine and Scott were content with an

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46. F.D.Maurice argued that the revised Christology proposed by the New Calvinists "must be the foundation of one Catholic Church; that if a Church existed, this must be the truth on which it rests", The Kingdom of Christ, vol.1, pp.154.

47. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.1, pp.398.

48. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.1, pp.231.

ecclesial expression that was little more than an unstructured network of like minded believers. Dialogue rather than institutionality would form the communal fabric of their movement.[49] They argued that traditional ecclesiastical frameworks were reified and idolatrous. The implicit critique of institutionality in pietism was given explicit formulation. Erskine's concern for a free and personal relationship to Christ leads him to question all patterns of ecclesial authority and institutionality which are set apart from the life of the individual believer. He claims that "the individual Christian contains in a measure all that is within the Church".[50]

These reservations should not lead to the conclusion that their work was devoid of any ecclesiological significance. Erskine, Scott, and Campbell did stress the importance of the social dimension of Christianity. However, their concept of church is predicated upon a fairly sweeping de-politicization of ecclesiology. We see an attempt to create an ecclesiological vocabulary in which

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49. W.B.Stephen contended that this flexible approach proved to have a considerable influence on both Presbyterian and Dissenting Churches, History of the Scottish Church, vol.1, (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1896) pp.594.

50. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.1, pp.399.

"political" categories such as rule, authority, power, institutionality, law, status, office, order, jurisdiction, etc., are emptied of any positive religious significance.

Erskine's ecclesiology calls for a form of ecclesial life which maximizes freedom and personal existence. The magisterial function of the church should lead to personal emancipation: "The object of all true teaching is to make us independent of authority".[51] He argues that the stress on authority and institutionality in ecclesiology represents a Judaizing tendency within Christianity.[52] The "political" mediation of Christianity through a structured hierarchical ecclesia is seen as an impediment to true personal religion:

> All false religion has its origin in taking God at second-hand, - in stopping short of a personal conscious meeting with him in out spirits - in allowing anything, whether of divine or human intervention, to stand between God and us.[53]

The church should be a loose voluntary fusion of believers. His definition of the church stresses its personal voluntary character:

A church is "God manifest in flesh" in man - the

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51. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.2, pp.210.

52. ibid., vol.1, pp.395.

53. ibid., vol.1, pp.216.

> mind of God shown forth in the willing, conscious acquiescence of men.[54]

Ecclesial order in the body of Christ is a spontaneous manifestation of authentic personal religion:

> the spirit acts through the renewed will and understanding of men, so that order proceeds according to the light and discernment consciously felt through the body, which is composed of children of light.[55]

Erskine wants to draw attention to the theological character of the church. Similar to other nineteenth-century ecclesiologists, such as Moehler and Schleiermacher, he underlines the Christological and pneumatological dimensions of ecclesial life. Erskine argues that the institutional forms of the church can only be external articulations of the pneumatic dynamism that draws the life of believers together in a spontaneous and non-coercive way.[56] Erskine rejects the Irvingite concept of anointed, spirit inspired, patterns of authority and institutionality which are biblically mandated and not amenable to significant change or revision. For Erskine the pneumatic principle of ecclesiology invalidates the traditional fallacy that "organization produces life" and underlines the basic

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54. ibid., vol.1, pp.394.

55. ibid., pp.396.

56. The Brazen Serpent, pp.194-195, 201.

Pietist insight that "only life can organize".[57]

Erskine portrays the church to be a social hierophany of the shared faith of free personal agents. The quality of communal life is dependent upon the quality of personal faith among believers. Authentic personal faith is the touchstone for ecclesial life and order. Indeed, Erskine argues that the faith of the individual believer is a kind of model or microcosm of the fully grown life and ministry of the church:

> An individual Christian is to a church that which is the first shoot of an acorn is to a full grown oak. He has in him, in a measure, the love and the knowledge, and the watchfulness and zeal, of the pastor and elder, and prophet and evangelist.[58]

Erskine's reflections internalize ecclesiological life to such an extent that one might despair of being able to describe any substantive ecclesial life beyond the intimate social world of individuals. In fact, it is arguable that Erskine deliberately refrained from proposing any substantive ecclesiological vision in the conviction that such theories ineluctably undermine the flexibility, plurality, and personalism essential to authentic Christian life.

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57. The Letters of Thomas Erskine, vol.1, 205.

58. ibid., pp.399.

4. The Doctrine of Reserve in Liberal Ecclesiology

Contrary to most "conservative" expectations that religious liberalism was on a slippery path to secularism, the revisions of liberalism in the first part of the nineteenth century represent a more aggressive appropriation of Christian doctrine, experience, and ecclesiality. Eighteenth-century liberals developed careful arguments for refraining from engaging in serious doctrinal debate as well as maintaining a more than arms-length relation from the crude world of religious pietism. Nineteenth-century liberals set out to reclaim the theological ground deliberately forfeited by Latitudinarianism. It engaged the major theological questions. It entered into theological controversy and argued for liberal interpretations on the decisive theological issues. It challenged the confessionalist appropriation of pietist fervour. It began to forge and proclaim its own visions of authentic "personal Christianity".

The New Calvinist school provided an important route out of the impasse generated by the theological minimalism of Latitudinarianism and its inability to handle the question of religious experience. However, it was less productive in its ecclesiological contributions. Latitudinarianism had saddled religious

liberalism with a truncated concept of the state and an impoverished concept of the function of the church in the public forum. New Calvinism provided little in the way of an enriched concept of the state or a more meaningful understanding of the relationship of the church to civil society.

Erskine's friend and colleague, A.J.Scott, did sense the need to provide more substantial reflection on the church question. Scott developed a number of important insights. He emphasized the importance of the "social" dimension of the church. The social dimension of the church is contrasted with that of its political dimension. Scott states that "the church is not an order, not an office, but a society".[59] This "social world" or "social system of Christianity" is built on non-political bonds of "mutual dependence, mutual interests, mutual affections."[60] It is based on a consensus which spontaneously emerges from the community rather than an authoritative imposition.[61]

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59. A.J.Scott, "The First Principle of Church Government" (1845) in Discourses, (London: MacMillan, 1866),pp. 318.

60. A.J.Scott, "The Social Systems of the Present Day Compared with Christianity" (1841), in Discourses, (London: MacMillan, 1866), pp.64.

61. A.J.Scott, "Principle of Authority as Sufficient for Social Organization", Discourses, (London:MacMillan, 1866), pp.98ff., 319.

Scott seems to underline a Latitudinarian point when he contends that ecclesial order is adaptable, that it is capable of continual change and adaptation according to the evolving character of human community.[62] However, he moves decisively beyond Latitudinarianism when he insists that Christianity itself is the prime agent of transformative change in culture, politics, and society.[63] The church, for Scott, is not simply an institutional community that needs to be ordered to the interests of liberal society. Rather, the Church itself is to be seen as the prime catalyst for dynamic social change and liberalization. Scott finds this creative impact exemplified in the movement to the abolition of slavery and the emergence of modern democracy.[64] He also argues that the "cooperative system" of Christianity exemplified in monasticism and certain forms of pietism (Moravians) anticipates and lays the groundwork for a new form of social consciousness.[65] With Christianity a movement of liberalization enters into the fabric of human social and political experience.

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62. A.J.Scott, Discourses, pp.138-141, 216.

63. A.J.Scott, Discourse, pp.142ff.

64. Discourses, pp.93ff.

65. "Socialism", Discourses, pp.191-2.

Scott anticipated a fundamental shift in liberal ecclesiology. He shared with Erskine the focus on the need to link the church to the critical elements in human experience. He rejected the gentlemanly agreement or "alliance" between church and liberal political order forged by Latitudinarian ecclesiology. The Latitudinarian reconstruction of ecclesiology called for a modification of the church in such a way that it would complement the interests of liberal order. However, this still implied a distinction and an arms-length relation between ecclesia and liberal polity. The church polity would be "ordered by" the requirements of a liberal civil society.

Scott now suggested a more radical move, namely that the goals of liberalization constitute the immanent core of ecclesial life. The church is called to be catalyst for the ongoing transformation of society and culture. Liberalism and ecclesia are wedded. The church is internally "ordered to" to the task of ongoing liberalization.

However, aside from these key insights Scott provided little in the way of systematic treatment of the question of church, state, and society. There is little evidence of any dialogue with a major tradition of enlightenment social theory. This ecclesiological

wimpishness in New Calvinism provides a clue to a serious problem for many streams of religious liberalism in nineteenth and twentieth-century Christianity.

Trajectories of modern religious liberalism which fail to enter into a substantive dialogue with some tradition of enlightenment social theory ineluctably fail to develop a strong ecclesiological option. The Latitudinarian dialogue with the natural jurisprudence tradition may have entailed serious difficulties - as did the Irvingite dialogue with patriarchal political theory. However, Latitudinarianism did present a systematic and well-thought out option which could and did influence ecclesiological reflection and practice. Furthermore, the Enlightenment generated a number of diverse trajectories of social theory. The disenchantment with natural jurisprudence could have signalled the need for an exploration of a trajectory more compatible with the evolving theological, moral, and political concerns of religious liberalism.

The failure of the New Calvinists to explore and develop a more substantive ecclesiological position may have been intentional. Liberals such as Erskine often tacitly hold the conviction that the absence of strong ecclesiological positions in some ways underlines their commitment to pluralism, tolerance, and co-

responsibility. However it is arguable that such values are seldom promoted by amorphous, vague, ecclesiological generalizations devoid of coherent theoretical content and concrete strategies. The ability of a modern theology of the Church to have a concrete impact upon ecclesiological theory and praxis is due in part to the coherence of an ecclesiological position generated out of a strong and sustained dialogue with a coherent modern social theory.[66]

Contemporary religious liberals tend to follow the path of the New Calvinists. They are content to underline the values of freedom, tolerance, dissent, etc., but are reticent about developing any substantive reconstruction of ecclesiology built out of a dialogue with any specific tradition of modern social theory.[67]

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66. One may dispute the merits of liberation theology, nevertheless even its critics recognize that it has had a very effective ecclesiological impact in South America. Liberation theology has developed a theology of church in the context of a strong and sustained dialogue with radical social theory. This dialogue has given its ecclesiological reflections a certain theoretical force, consistency, and relevancy that is seldom found in contemporary theological discourse on the nature of the church.

67. The ecclesiological treatises of Hans Küng represent some of the most outstanding contributions of contemporary Catholic liberalism. Küng pursues values critical to religious liberalism (tolerance, pluralism, freedom, the right to dissent, the rights of the academy, co-responsibility, etc.) within the context of a treatment of fairly familiar ecclesiological questions without any significant reference to modern social

The result is a murky collection of themes, insights, and aspirations that has entered into and become a significant part of popular and academic discourse on the church. The underlying hope seems to be that this expanding "liberalization" of ecclesiological consciousness will reach a critical mass that will effect a spontaneous transformation of the Church. Such sweet ecclesiological dreams are usually easily overrun by the more tough-minded ecclesiological strategies worked out by the radicals on the left and the neo-conservatives on the right.

However, the development of nineteenth-century liberal reflection on the problem of the Church does not end with the polite ecclesiological reticence and reserve of a Thomas Erskine. A more aggressive brand of theoretical discourse on the nature of the Church appears with the work of religious liberals such as S.T.Coleridge and Thomas Arnold.

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theories. The result is an informative text and, for the reader sympathetic with Küng's liberalism, a somewhat refreshing exploration of the traditional ecclesiological topics. However, it offers little in the way of a reconstructed theology of the church which systematically engages and responds to the critical issues raised by debates in social and political philosophy.

CHAPTER IX

ROMANTICISM, CIVIC HUMANISM AND LIBERAL ECCLESIOLOGY

> The liberal Anglicans were in revolt against the 18th century, against that world of optimism, of utilitarianism and individualism which, in the words of Cobban, finally came into its own in England in the 19th century. All the signs of the Romantic revolt against the 18th century are present in the ideas of the Liberal Anglicans: their political thought was in direct line of descent from Burke and Coleridge; their philosophy was Coleridgean, opposed to the mechanical, materialistic epistemology of the Lockian tradition; they looked to the historians and philosophers of the "German Movement", rather than to the French liberal thinkers, for inspiration; their religion was not an external form, an affair of "evidences" and rational proofs, but an inward conviction and belief in God's providential government of the world. In short, they belonged to the "Germano-Coleridgean" school, as John Mill called it.[1]

Recent interpretations of diverse ecclesiological contributions in the first half of the nineteenth century have stressed the way in which their authors were rooted in a "common tradition" which traced its roots to Coleridge and Wordsworth.[2] John Coulson and Stephen Prickett argue that the theological

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1. Duncan Forbes, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History, (Cambridge University Press, 1952), p.1.

2. John Coulson, Newman and the Common Tradition: A Study in the Language of Church and Society, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970); Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

contributions of major thinkers such as Newman, Maurice, and Keble need to be interpreted in the context of a line of discourse originating out of the English Romantic movement. Newman did recognize a certain family resemblance between the contributions of the Oxford movement and those of English Romantics such as Coleridge and Wordsworth. Others acknowledged a direct dependence on their Romantic mentors. Thomas Arnold, the founding father of modern English religious liberalism, Julius Hare, and F.D.Maurice, the catalyst for Anglican Social Catholicism, presented themselves as "disciples" of the philosopher of English Romanticism, S.T.Coleridge. This tradition of thought is significant since Coleridge and Arnold wrote extensively on the church question and were key figures in the reconstruction and redirection of nineteenth-century English religious liberalism. Coleridge and Arnold inaugurated the modern tradition of Liberal Anglicanism. One of their key contributions to this revision of English religious liberalism was the development of an ecclesiological approach which represented a basic departure from the paradigm adopted by the Latitudinarian tradition.

1. Romanticism and the Civic Humanist Tradition:

The relationship of Romanticism to the Enlightenment and Enlightenment social theory is a difficult one to unravel. In large part the difficulty lies in the amorphous character of the Romantic movement and the problems involved in providing a precise definition of Romanticism. Some intellectual historians argue that Romanticism is a fairly clear-cut school of thought that arose in reaction to the Enlightenment tradition.[3] They point to a distinct shift that took place in the years between 1770 and 1820. They see the Romantic tradition as an explicit "revolt" against the Enlightenment rather than a development or expansion of it. The Romantic idealists are portrayed as reactionaries who repudiated the Enlightenment, rejected the modern state, modern science, and modern technology, and who nurtured a nostalgia for the moral ideals and spiritual aspirations of pre-industrial Medieval civilization.[4] This interpretation draws a very marked

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[3]. This line of interpretation is applied to English Romanticism by C.E.Vaughan, The Romantic Revolt (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1907) and Alfred Cobban, Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929).

[4]. Edward Norman applies this interpretation of Romanticism to F.D.Maurice's theological contribution. With more than a tinge of contempt he refers to the acknowledged "father of modern Anglican theology" as a "Tory paternalist" dressed in "German idealism",

distinction between Romanticism and modern thought. Romanticism is seen as the expression of an ongoing cultural rebellion against the inescapable processes of modernization and secularization.

There are at least three major difficulties with this line of interpretation. First, while it is true that there were reactionary trajectories of Romantic thought, it would be wrong to identify Romanticism as a whole with such trajectories. If the Enlightenment has often been falsely equated with its liberal trajectory so too the Romantic movement has been falsely identified with reactionary traditions. The Romantic movement did generate a number of important motifs such as expressivism, historicism, and the stress on the organic character of social life, which were critical to conservatives such as Burke, Chateaubriand, De Maistre, Muller, and De Bonald . Nevertheless, these motifs were important ingredients in the intellectual development of other traditions of discourse. Liberals such as John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, and Wilhelm Humboldt, and radicals such as Carlyle, the later Lammenais, and the left-wing Hegelians were also indebted to Romantic insights.

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advocating a "quasi mystical, organic view of the state" (in Church and Society in England 1770-1970, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp.171-172).

This brings us to the second difficulty with this line of interpretation, namely, the tendency to perceive the general concerns of the Romantic movement as being in stark contrast to those of the Enlightenment. Increasingly since the 1960s intellectual historians have argued that the relationship between these two movements is more complex and dialectical than simply that of "reaction" or "revolt". Even Alfred Cobban states that if he would have rewritten his classic study Edmund Burke and the Revolt of the Eighteenth Century (1929) he would have emphasized the "basic affiliations" of this movement with Enlightenment thought. He states that:

> though, they (the romantics) were in revolt against the aridity, the lack of poetry, of the 18th century, (they nevertheless) represent...not so much a denial as an enlargement and liberalization of its ideas.[5]

Romanticism was a reaction to particular elements in eighteenth-century Enlightenment social theory (e.g.utilitarianism, rationalism, individualism). However, it was not a reaction to the Enlightenment as a whole. In many ways Romantic insights respond to and develop the distinct problematics generated within the Enlightenment. In particular it provided important new

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[5]. Preface to his 1960 edition, Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929, 1960) pp.xiv.

theoretical insights into the historical character of human existence, the development of the concept of "culture", and a new appreciation of critical importance of language and symbols in human thought.

Finally, there is substantial evidence of a dialogue in English Romantic circles with one major Enlightenment tradition of social and political thought - a tradition that broke cleanly with the natural jurisprudence tradition. The jurisprudence model of the Grotian school and the various developments of this model in Locke, Scottish social theory, the Latitudinarians, Warburton, and neo-utilitarians such as Paley had exercised a dominant but not a complete control of political and ecclesiological debates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Recent historiography has stressed the critical role of another important but largely overlooked school of thought. J.G.A.Pocock refers to this tradition as "civic humanist" or the "classical republican" tradition.[6]

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[6]. J.G.A.Pocock, "Virtues, Rights, and Manners, A Model for Historians of Political Thought" Political Theory, 9(1981)pp.354. See Pocock's contributions to this research: The Machiavellian Moment, Pt.3, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); "Civic Humanism: its Role in Anglo-American Thought" and "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the 18th Century", in Politics, Language and Time (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp.80-103, 104-147. In addition to Pocock's work there are two earlier studies by Z.S.Fink, The Classical Republicans: An Essay

The civic humanist tradition had a significant place in English political debates during the late seventeenth and eighteenth century. In seventeenth-century England the main representative of this tradition was James Harrington (1611-1677).[7] In the eighteenth century this tradition of discourse was carried on by representatives of the Whig faction of the Country Party such as John Toland and Lord Bolingbrooke. It was a real tradition in the sense that it was a coherent movement of thought, those engaged in this movement were conscious of a historical line of debate, and major authorities were acknowledged (e.g. classical writers such as Aristotle and Cicero, the civic humanists of the Renaissance, and English political theorists such as Sydney, Marvell, and

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in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth Century England (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1945), and Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development, and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II Until the War with the Thirteen Colonies (New York: Atheneum, 1968). Other studies on this tradition include Felix Raab's The English Face of Machiavelli, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964) and Charles Blitzer, An Immortal Commonwealth: The Political Thought of James Harrington, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

7. J.G.A.Pocock (ed.), The Political Works of James Harrington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); H.F.Russell Smith, Harrington and His Oceana (New York: Octagon Books, 1971); Charles Blitzer, An Immortal Commonwealth. Harrington was a student of Chillingworth's at Oxford (W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, vol.4, pp.281.

Harrington). Finally, those who adhered to the tradition were committed to carrying its central debates forward.[8] Pocock argues that by the mid-eighteenth century this tradition was exercising a significant influence on English political debates.[9]

English Romantics such as Coleridge and Wordsworth found that the heroic republican tradition was a much more congenial tradition than that of Lockean jurisprudence. The civic humanist tradition is praised by Wordsworth in a famous sonnet which honours "the elder Sidney, Marvell, Harrington, young Vane and others who called Milton friend."[10] John Morrow, J.D.Coates, and J.A.Pocock have alerted us to Coleridge's debts to

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8. J.G.A.Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies", in Politics, Language and Time, pp.107. A.MacIntyre discusses some of the aspects of a tradition of enquiry in Whose Justice? Which Rationality? (Notre Dame" University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), chs. 1, 18.

9. J.G.A.Pocock, "The Myth of John Locke and the Obsession with Liberalism" in John Locke, ed. by J.G.A.Pocock and R.Ashcroft (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980). Pocock's critique of the traditional thesis of the dominance of Lockean liberalism has been challenged by a number of scholars (R.Pecchioli, J.P.Diggins, I.F.Kramnick, Joyce O.Appleby). For Pocock's response to his critics see "Between Gog And Magog: The Republican Thesis and the Ideologia Americana", Journal for the History of Ideas, 48 (1987) pp.325-346.

10. J.G.A.Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies", in Politics, Language and Time, pp.107.

the civic humanist tradition.[11] These English Romantics helped effect a penetration of the civic humanist paradigm into the tradition of religious liberalism. Furthermore, with Coleridge and Arnold, there was a concerted attempt to bring civic humanist concerns to bear on the discipline of ecclesiology.

2. English Civic Humanist Perspectives on Church and State

The civic humanist tradition diverged from liberal jurisprudence in a number of key areas. First, the civic humanist tradition developed rather than jettisoned the classical Aristotelian approach to politics. It reasserted the critical connection of politics to ethics and the pursuit of virtue. It reestablished the teleological approach in ethics and politics. It argued that the full development of the human person is only possible insofar as the individual

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11. John Morrow, "The National Church in Coleridge's Church and State: A Response to Allen", 47 (1986) pp.640-652; J.D.Coates, "Coleridge's Dept to Harrington" Journal for the History of Ideas, 38 (1977) pp.501-508; Pocock notes Coleridge's connection to the civic humanist tradition in the concluding remarks of his introduction to The Political Writings of James Harrington, pp.152; see also E.Brinkley, Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1955).

is an active participant in a dynamic independent political community, a polis or republic.[12] Harrington argues that there is an essential connection between the nature of the polis and the nature of the human person:

> As the form of a man is the image of God, so the form of a government is the image of man. A man is both a sensual and a philosophical creature...Formation of government is the creation of a political creature after the image of a philosophical creature, or it is an infusion of the soul or faculties of a man into the body of a multitude. The more the soul and faculties of a man (in the manner of their being infused into the body of a multitude) are refined or made incapable of passion, the more perfect is the form of government. Not the refined spirit of a man, or of some men, is a good form of government; but a good form of government is the refined spirit of a nation.[13]

This relation cuts two ways. The polis cannot actualize itself without the virtue of its citizens nor can the individual actualize himself outside of the polis.

A fundamental tenet of the civic humanist position is that the polis is geared to the total good of the human person, both spiritual as well as material. Its sovereign power over human community is to be exercised not only for the pursuit of material goods and political

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12. J.G.A.Pocock, "Civic Humanism: its Role in Anglo-American Thought" in Politics, Language and Time (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp.85

13. James Harrington, A System of Politics, in The Political Writings of James Harrington, ed. by Charles Blitzer (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), IV: 8-9, 10-12.

stability but also for the pursuit of the moral goods. In the light of this Harrington argues that the polis must concern itself with religion. However, he does not follow the jurisprudence argument, namely that the concern for religion is entailed by the purely political considerations of social peace and public order. Harrington argues that there is a more fundamental relation between religious and political life than that which is envisioned within the jurisprudence tradition.

> religion is every whit as indelible a character in man's nature as reason. Languages is not a more natural intercourse between the soul of one man and another than religion is between God and the soul of man. As not this language nor that language, but some language [is natural to every nation], so not this religion nor that religion, yet some religion is natural to every nation. The soul of government as the true and perfect image of the soul of man is every whit as necessarily religious as rational.[14]

Thus, it is not surprising that civic humanists could

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[14]. James Harrington, A System of Politics, in The Political Writings of James Harrington, ed. by Charles Blitzer (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), IV, 13-16. The link between rationality and religion is an important emphasis in Harrington's thought. John Toland, the editor of Harrington's works, provided a substantial development of this theme in his Christianity Not Mysterious (1696), one of the seminal works in the emergence of the English Deist tradition. Toland repudiated the concept of doctrinal "mysteries" and argued that religion should be seen as a natural universal dimension of human experience subject to the standards of rationality. See Stephen H.Daniel's discussion of Toland's approach to religion in chapter one of John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

not envisage or tolerate any suggestion of a strict or formal separation of religion and politics. The vitality of communal life is dependent upon the fact that it is geared to the quest for the total human good. The human goods are pursued in the context of human association. In pursuing one's own goods one must ineluctably link that quest up with that of others. The pursuit of personal good in the polis must be joined to the pursuit of a more universal or common good.[15] This common good arises out of the total human experience and politics emerges as the unique vehicle for the pursuit of the good in the community.[16] Since religion is a critical element in the complex definition of the human good, therefore, the religious dimension must be integrated as a core feature in the life of a political community. Republican order needs the support of a "civil religion".[17]

In the republican tradition personal and civic virtues are seen as necessary to the effective pursuit

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15. J.G.A.Pocock, "Civic Humanism: its Role in Anglo-American Thought", pp.86-87.

16. James Harrington, A System of Politics, sections IV-IX.

17. See Mark Goldie's discussion, "The Civil Religion of James Harrington", in The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe, ed. A.Pagden, pp.197-222.

of the common good and the vitality of political order. A republic cannot endure merely as a well-oiled juridical system. It is dependent for its survival upon the virtues of its citizenry. The cultivation of the appropriate virtues for civic life (justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance, responsibility) is essential for the persistence of the polis.

Within this school of thought one of the great corrupting factors in republic life is the temptation to focus too strongly on the multiplicity of particular personal goods. Civic humanism traditionally advocated a certain degree of Spartan heroism, a personal self-discipline, as a necessary prerequisite for a selfless pursuit of the common good. The republic survives by a high spirited devotion to res publica. It is corrupted when individuals place personal gratification over the public good.[18] Civic humanism sees the problem of moral corruption as one of the most sensitive and critical political issues. The fragile fabric of republican order is fatally disrupted when civic virtue decays and private interests move to the fore. This concern for cultivation of civic virtue in order to overcome the corrupting influence of personal interest does not arise

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[18]. J.G.A.Pocock, "Civic Humanism: its Role in Anglo-American Thought", pp.87, 89.

with any real force in the jurisprudence model since the state is primarily defined as a constitutional juridical order which is fine-tuned for the management and satisfaction of just such competing personal interests.

In the civic humanist tradition religion not only defines a distinctive set of fundamental goals for human existence it is also a key element in the formation of the virtues necessary to the effective pursuit of those goals. The vitality of civic life hinges in large part on the nature and vitality of its moral and religious life and its capacity to generate a meaningful civic ethos and cultivate the virtues necessary for responsible citizenship.

For Harrington the link between religious and political life must be expressed in the formation of an "established" or "national" church, a civil religion. Just as religion should be seen to be a natural and universal dimension of the human condition so too the ecclesial dimension is a natural and universal dimension of public life. As such, ecclesiology is not distinctively Christian, nor is it validated by reference to a unique body of revealed doctrine. Ecclesiology, like religion, can be subject to the

standards established by human prudence.[19]

In exploring the question of ecclesial order Harrington points out that an established church, like governmental systems, can have a variety of expressions. In fact, he attempts to link varieties of establishment with diverse forms of government (monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy).[20] Attitudes to doctrine, authority, the role of the clergy, tolerance, etc., will vary according to the diverse patterns of political life in any given historical era. Establishment in an absolute monarchical system will be ecclesiastically coercive. It "pretends to infallibility in matters of religion". Doctrinal uniformity is imposed. The clergy are appointed and hierarchically structured. Democratic political order will entail a different form of religious life.[21] In this case the established church

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19. Mark Goldie states that "for Harrington patterns of ecclesiastical government were intimately bound up with those of the civil. There cannot be a free republic without lay supremacy in the church". "The Civil Religion of James Harrington", pp.202.

20. James Harrington, A System of Politics, VI.

21. Harrington favours the democratic model with some qualifications. Aristotelian political traditions contended that there were material and intellectual bases for true autonomy and participation. Whereas the liberal jurisprudence tradition wished to define autonomy juridically, Aristotelian political traditions contended that there were material and intellectual bases for autonomy and participation. Harrington follows this line of thought and places certain

will reflect the comprehensive majority position in the community. It will be structured in such a way that it allows for and nurtures "liberty of conscience" in religious matters. The democratic national church should be geared to providing the education and skills necessary for a meaningful exercise of religious freedom.

> Democracy pretends not to infallibility, but is in matters of religion no more than a seeker, not taking away from its people their liberty of conscience but educating them, or so many of them as shall like of it, in such a manner or knowledge in divine things as may render them best able to make use of their liberty of conscience, which it performs by the national church.[22]

Civic Humanism stresses the role of the citizen as free self-determining actor in the ecclesial realm as well as in the political realm. The mature citizen is one who has developed the skills and virtues necessary for meaningful involvement and participation in political and religious life.

In the civic humanist tradition the precise role of the citizen in the polis was something that had to be forged creatively in the historical context in which he or she is situated. In contrast to the static

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restrictions on the qualifications for citizenship. Citizenship, for example, entailed a certain level of economic security (landholders).

[22]. James Harrington, A System of Politics, IV, 21.

definition of offices and rights in the jurisprudence model, the dynamic character of citizenship is strongly underlined in civic humanism. This view of citizenship redefines the nature of ecclesial membership. The goal of the National Church is to nurture religious maturity and autonomy in its citizenry so that they can fully participate in the life of the republic (in its ecclesial and political expressions). Ecclesial membership is not defined as obedience to a static deposit of doctrines and rites enforced by juridical authorities. It is a practice, an activity, that demands maturity, competence and virtue to be properly engaged in. Thus the primary function of the elected clergy in the national church will be educative - equipping their congregations with the necessary intellectual skills for understanding religion in general and the exegetical tools for the study of scripture.[23] In this way they will be given tools necessary to be informed participants of the ecclesial republic rather than passive members.

This ideal of active ecclesial citizenship is developed at length in the second book of his work, The

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[23]. James Harrington, Oceana (Toland ed.), pp.88-89.

Prerogative of Popular Government.[24] This section, entitled "a political discourse concerning ordination", focusses on the question of ordination to office in the church. Harrington composed this treatise as a refutation of a defense of the sacerdotal concept of ordination presented by Henry Hammond in his treatise, the Six Quares. Hammond's work was a critique of the Hobbesian theory of ordination which was laid out in chapter 42 of the Leviathan. Despite Harrington's sympathy with Hobbes' critique of the sacerdotal concept of ordination, nevertheless he does part company with Hobbes on a number of important issues.

First, Harrington emphasized the critical importance of a "republican" approach to the politics of ordination. Harrington argues that there were two conflicting concepts of ordination in the early Christian church, chirotonia (holding up of hands) and chirothesis (the laying on of hands).[25] He contends that the practice of chirotonia (the holding up of hands, i.e. popular suffrage by the congregation) was the primitive mode of election to office in the early

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[24], James Harrington, The Political Works of James Harrington, ed. by J.G.A.Pocock, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp.499-566.

[25]. ibid., pp.500ff., pp.384-5.

church.[26] According to Harrington the primitive churches (ecclesiae) were modelled on the civic ecclesiae, the civic assemblies, one of the few reservoirs of popular government in the Roman Empire.[27] However, original ecclesial practice of election was abandoned in the church with the "invention" of chirothesia, the concept of ordination by the laying on of hands. Harrington argues that the direct antecedents of this clericalizing practice of chirothesia can be found in a late development of Hebrew history, the institution of the Sanhedrin. This new hierarchical Jewish caste with its rite of ordination and its insistence on a distinct clerical class established a new paradigm which grounds all forms of jure divino ecclesiologies (presbyterianism, episcopalism, and papalism).[28] The emergence of "priestcraft" represents the de-patriotization of Christianity and the corruption

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[26]. ibid., pp.384.

[27]. ibid., pp.81; Mark Goldie, "The Civil Religion of James Harrington", pp.217-18.

[28]. The Political Works of James Harrington, pp.92-93. Harrington writes that "this track [Judaic deviation to sacerdotal order] was exactly trodden over again by the Christians: first, to the presbytery, from thence to the bishop, and that by means of the same chirothesia or imposition of the hands take up from the Jews; and out of this bishop stepped up the Pope and his seventy Cardinals". (pp.384-5).

of its republican character of ecclesial life.[29]

Thus Harrington follows Hobbes in rejecting the sacerdotal character of ordination and insisting on the political nature of this act. However, for Harrington the essentially "political" character of ordination lies not in the fact that it is determined by the sovereign authority of the political executive (as in the jurisprudence model) but rather it is due to the fact of the essentially civic or republican nature of the process of ordination. Pocock writes that

> When Harrington intervened and attacked Hammond where the latter was attacking Hobbes, it was with intentions of his own which were not Hobbes's. His aim was to show that the congregation which exercise chirotonia was an ecclesia and almost a republic: a civic assembly not acting under or even exercising a sovereign command, so much as exercising human prudence and manifesting itself as a rational, public and political entity. Book II is "a political discourse concerning ordination"; it seeks to prove not that ordination is subject to the primacy of politics, but an act in the highest sense political in its essence.[30]

Thus the original practice of the church not only manifested the political texture of ecclesial life, it also embodied, in its most primitive and pristine form, the ideal pattern of political life, civic

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29. Mark Goldie discusses the strong anti-clerical bent of Harrington's thought, "The Civil Religion of James Harrington', pp.208, 212f. He suggests that Harrington coined the term "priestcraft" (pp.202).

30. ibid., pp.94 (introduction).

republicanism.[31] For Harrington civic humanism and primitive Apostolic ecclesial practice confirm each other. In his analysis of the biblical description of the ordination process for the new apostle to succeed Judas (Book of Acts, ch.1) Harrington culls out these conclusions.

> First that the chirotonia is not only the more ancient way of ordination in the commonwealth of Israel, but in the Church of Christ. Secondly, that the chirothesia or imposition of the hands is in no way necessary unto ordination in the Christian church. Thirdly that the discipline of the Christian church was primitively popular...Fourthly, that ordination in the commonwealth of Oceana, being exactly after this pattern, is exactly according unto the discipline of the church of Christ. And fifthly, that ordination and election in this example are not two, but one and the same thing.[32]

Another major difference between Harrington's and Hobbes' treatment of the question of the established church is that Harrington's stress on the natural secular character of ecclesial life did not entail a Hobbesian "secularization" of the church. For Hobbes the institutions of ecclesial life were empty of real spiritual content. For Harrington the Holy Spirit was working in and through natural political (republican) life of the early Christian communities. These

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31. M.Goldie, "The Civil Religion of James Harrington", pp.215.

32. The Political Works of James Harrington, pp.544-5.

communities operated as popular political assemblies generating leadership in natural political ways.[33] However, all republican political order, civic or ecclesial, was, in some way, essentially connected to the regnum Christi.[34] In this sense there was not a strict discontinuity between the realm of the sacred and the secular. Pocock recognized this feature of Harrington's ecclesiology:

> The second book of the Prerogative is subtitled: "a political discourse concerning ordination"; and its purpose is to show that ordination is an act performed by men in their capacity as political beings, not by the Holy Ghost transmitting charismatic gifts through the laying on of hands by a line of successors. Yet we must always beware of dismissing this as simple secularization. It was Harrington's constant intention to say that God was present among men in their civic and political capacity; though this conveyed the further meaning that he was present among his Hebrew and Christian elect in the political nature which they shared with all men, not in their peculiar character as holy and chosen people. This was to differentiate him from Hobbes on the interpretation of both theocracy and congregationalism.[35]

These fundamental differences between civic humanist and jurisprudence models of church and state raise a significant question, namely, what accounts for the "liberal" line of continuity between the two schools

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[33]. ibid., pp.543-4.

[34]. ibid., pp.96.

[35]. ibid., pp.90.

of thought? There are a number of critical areas where the "liberalism" of civic humanism stands out and lines of agreement can be traced.

First, the traditional theological concept of the church as a divine supernatural institution is jettisoned. Harrington, like Hobbes, rejected the jure divino concept of Church. The first major critic of Oceana, Henry Ferne, attacked Harrington for his Hobbesian approach to the Church.[36] Despite the considerable differences between the thought of Hobbes and Harrington in method and approach, Pocock concurs with Ferne that "the ecclesiological argument of the Oceana was rightly to be read as a republican intensification of that of Leviathan."[37]

Secondly, the church order is a flexible institution determined by political prudence. After giving an historical overview of a number of diverse forms of religious polity in Jewish and early Christian history Harrington states that

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36. ibid., pp.77ff.

37. ibid. pp.79. Commenting on Hobbes's and Harrington's treatment of the Old Testament model of theocracy, Pocock points out that while Harrington lays greater stress on the republican features of "Israel", nevertheless, like Hobbes, "in his Israel, covenant is swallowed up in commonwealth".(pp.79-80).

> it is a clear and undeniable result of the whole, that neither God, nor Christ, or the Apostles, ever instituted any government ecclesiastical or civil upon any other principles than those of human prudence.[38]

The determination of ecclesiastical order falls firmly into the realm of political prudence.

Finally, Harrington subjects traditional concepts of objective doctrinal truth to rigorous critique and argues for an approach to religious symbols and concepts that is attuned to the needs of moral and political life.

There is a real line of continuity between certain key ecclesiological positions in liberal jurisprudence and civic humanism - positions central to the ecclesiological stance of religious liberalism (see chapter one). Nevertheless, civic humanism did imply significant revisions of liberal approaches to the Church. First, there was a new approach to the relationship between church and state due in large part to the more exalted view of the moral ends of the political sphere. Secondly, there was a new emphasis on the educative function of the Church vis a vis the development of a civic ethos. Third, there was new stress on the need for democratization of ecclesial

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38. James Harrington, "The Art of Law-Giving" in Oceana and Other Works, ed.by John Toland, (London, 1771; University Microfilm Reprint, 1978), pp.401.

life. Thus the civic humanist tradition in England offered a distinctive alternative for the reconstruction of ecclesiology that still maintained and reinforced the basic principles of religious liberalism.

3. Coleridge and the Revision of Anglican Religious Liberalism

Students of Coleridge from J.S.Mill onwards have paid tribute to the impact of Coleridge on English intellectual culture.[39] In terms of his religious thought Coleridge is portrayed as an intellectual source for many diverse theological movements from Unitarianism to High Church Anglicanism. However, it is my contention that his fundamental contribution lay in the direction of a revision and renewal of the tradition of religious liberalism. It was liberals such as Julius Hare, Thomas Arnold, and F.D. Maurice who most explicitly underlined their theological debt to Coleridge and attempted to develop his key insights.

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39. J.S.Mill, On Bentham and Coleridge, (New York: Harper, 1962). For Coleridge's impact upon ecclesiological debates see C.R.Sanders, Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1942), John Coulson, Newman and the Common Tradition: A Study in the Language of Church and Society, and Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church.

Furthermore, in spite of the respect given to Coleridge by High Churchmen such as Keble, Newman, and Irving, nevertheless, many of Coleridge's key positions break with those advocated within High Church or Confessionalist ecclesiologies. His critique of the priesthood and his strong affirmation of the Reformation stands in stark contrast to the spirit of the Tractarian movement.[40] His emphasis on the essential cultural and political functions of the National Church and the ambiguous institutional status of the "Christian Church" indicate basic disagreements with the Irvingite trajectory.

In defense of the conservative character of Coleridge's contribution one might point to Coleridge's strong criticisms of the secular liberalism represented by the tradition of political economy in the early nineteenth century as well as his repudiation of the great figures of Enlightenment Anglican religious liberalism such as Warburton and Paley.[41] However, most

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[40]. See Paul Avis' discussion of Coleridge's resistance to a "catholic" interpretation of the Anglican tradition in Anglicanism and the Christian Church (Minn.: Fortress Press, 1989) pp.239-244.

[41]. See Coleridge's polemic against the tradition of political economy in Lay Sermons ed.by R.J.White, in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), vol.6. R.J.White discusses Coleridge's attack on the Benthamites and utilitarians in his introduction to this

of Coleridge's critiques of liberal political economy and Latitudinarian religious liberalism can be traced to his allegiance to the civic humanist paradigm. In his works On the Constitution of Church and State, Lay Sermons, and The Friend Coleridge attempts to reconstruct ecclesiology and social theory on the basis of a dialogue with the civic humanist tradition.[42] His contributions develop civic humanist themes in the light of his romantic insights into the problem of culture, public norms, and enlightenment.

A. Social Ethics and Political Society

One of the most striking aspects of Coleridge's contribution is his republican stress on the need for the development of a civic ethos for political life. Coleridge dismissed the quest for a type of objective moral neutrality characteristic of liberal utilitarian theory. He did not argue that the attempt to develop

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volume (pp.xxix-xlvii).

[42]. S.T.Coleridge, On the Constitution of the Church and State According to the Idea of Each, ed.John Barrell, (London: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1972; Lay Sermons ed.by R.J.White, in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), vol.6; The Friend in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

and promulgate such a view was illusory. Political discourse could be dominated by a social and political theory devoid of commitments to substantive moral values. Furthermore, he warned this view was taking root in modern political life. However, he repudiated such a stance arguing that this morally truncated social and political theory could not offer an adequate basis for meaningful political community.

Coleridge attempted to inaugurate a critical re-assessment of the social, political, and moral ramifications of the modern market economy. A number of studies have underlined the significance of Coleridge's more Keynsian view of active state intervention in the economy as well as his attempt to subject the market economy to a critical social ethic.[43] During the period

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[43]. A reassessment of the character and significance of Coleridge's contribution to modern social theory has taken place over the last 30 years. These interpretations take issue with the traditional reading of Coleridge as an exemplar of a reactionary Romantic conservatism (e.g.Crane Britton, The Political Ideas of the English Romantics, 1926, or Alfred Cobban, Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929, 1960). More recent studies contributing to a more positive interpretation include: Humanist versus Economist: The Economic Thought of S.T.Coleridge, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) by W.F.Kennedy; Coleridge: Critic of Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959) by John Colmer; The Idea of a Secular Society (London, 1963) by D.L.Munby; and Coleridge and the Idea of the Modern State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) by David Calleo. Also of significance are the introductions to the Lay Sermons, The Friend, and the

from 1816 to 1820 Coleridge wrote extensively on social and economic questions. His social theory was forged during a period of severe economic recession in England. Westminster liberals argued that the difficulty lay in too much taxation and government intervention in the economy. They pointed to the growth of the national debt (which had reached an unprecedented level of almost one billion pounds during the war years) as the primary cause of the recession. Working-class Painite ideology focussed the brunt of their critique upon government corruption. Social theorists on both sides advocated a hands-off policy in regard to the economy.

Coleridge developed a very different analysis of the problem. First, he put forward a fairly astute insight into the "trade cycle" characteristic of capitalist economies:

> Within the last sixty years or perhaps a somewhat larger period...there have occurred at intervals of about 12 or 13 years each, certain periodic revolutions of credit...a rapid series of explosions, (in mercantile language, a Crash) and a consequent precipitations of the general system.[44]

Coleridge characterized the accepted economic wisdom for dealing with recession in these terms:

Constitution of the Church and State by J.R.White, B.E.Rooke, and John Colmer in the new edition of Coleridge's collected works published by Princeton University Press.

[44]. Coleridge, Lay Sermons, pp,202-3.

> We shall be told too, that the very evils of this System, even the periodical crash itself, are to be regarded but as so much superfluous steam ejected by the Escape Pipes and Safety valves of a self-regulating Machine; and lastly, that in a free and trading country all things find their level.[45]

Coleridge takes issue with this position on three counts. First, he doubts the merits of this strategy in terms of sound economic analysis. In his essay "On Vulgar Errors Respecting Taxes and Taxation" Coleridge puts forth an argument that anticipates the work of J.M.Keynes. He contends that the inflationary measures of taxation and national debt are essential tools towards the construction of a stable healthy economy. They are "the reservoir and water works" for economic development.[46] Permanent inflation, he argues, provides a "universal stimulant" for economic growth.[47] Thus political intervention in the economy is not a hindrance but an important aid to economic development. Coleridge points out that it was during the war years, when the extension of government intervention in the economy was most evident, that England witnessed its most

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45. ibid., pp.205.

46. Coleridge, The Friend, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp.234.

47. ibid., pp.234.

significant period of economic expansion.[48]

For Coleridge this prophetically Keynesian critique of laissez-faire economic policy was only a prelude to raising a set of more fundamental ethical concerns. The economic malfunctions of the free market economy are not just the ineluctable adjustments of a self-regulating machine. They are moral and social evils. Coleridge wants to subject the economy to a moral critique. He argues that liberal political economy fails to take into consideration the effects of the vast social disruption that accompanies wide fluctuations in the trade-cycle. It treats persons as things which can somehow adapt and "find their level" in response to economic fluctuation. It is blind to the devastating and long-term impact of economic collapse on communal and personal well-being:

> Persons are not Things...man does not find his level. Neither in Body nor in Soul does the Man find his level: After a hard and calamitous season, during which the thousand wheels of some vast manufactory had remained silent as a frozen water fall, be it that plenty has returned and that Trade has once more become brisk and stirring: go, ask the overseer, and question the parish doctor, whether the workman's health and temperance with the staid and respectful Manners best taught by the inward dignity of conscious self-support, have found their level again.[49]

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48. Lay Sermons, pp.158-9.

49. ibid., pp.206-7.

Coleridge argues that because economic systems impact upon the conditions for the material, social, and moral development of the human person, therefore, they cannot being seen as morally neutral. Development is not straightforward material progress. Mere material accumulation does not lead to development. Political ethics needs a more substantial view of the complex character of human development.

Coleridge makes a distinction between two aspects of development - development as "cultivation" (culture) and development as "civilization" (material progress). Material progress largely depends upon the interrelationship between landed ("permanence") and commercial ("progression") interests.[50] The healthy relation between the two estates leads to "a continuing and progressive civilization". However, Coleridge warns that sheer material progress ("civilization") is not an adequate goal for social development. Excessive development of the material dimension of a society leads to serious distortions. Authentic development ("cultivation") embraces the moral and religious aspects

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[50]. "All advances in civilization, and the rights and privileges of citizens, are especially connected with, and derived from the four classes of the mercantile, the manufacturing, the distributive, and the professional." On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.17.

of the human person as well as the material:

> civilization is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the look of health, and a nation so distinguished more fitly to be called a varnished than a polished people; where this civilization is not grounded in cultivation, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity. We must be men in order to be citizens.[51] ... a nation can never be too cultivated, but may easily become an over-civilized race.[52]

Development which is merely economic, which fails to recognize the moral, cultural, and religious dimensions of authentic human maturation will not lead to true development.

This emphasis on the moral dimension of questions of political economy led Coleridge to insist on a redefinition of the role of the state. Coleridge rejected laissez-faire economic policy. He condemned the theory of the self-regulating economy as "superstition". His "Allegorical Vision" in the Lay Sermons portrays this economic mystification as the flip side of religious mystification. He described the free-market paradigm as "a string of blind men" led by "No One" and who were convinced that "infinite blindness supplied the want of sight".[53] Coleridge argued that

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51. ibid., pp.33-4.

52. ibid., pp.49.

53. Lay Sermons, pp.156.

the political community has a fundamental role to play in the development of modern society. The economic realm needs to be tempered by an enlightened political action that is sensitive to the broader issues involved in social, cultural, political, and economic development.

> I feel assured that the Spirit of Commerce is itself capable of being at once counteracted and enlightened by the Spirit of the State, to the advantage of both.[54]

Political intervention will improve the performance of the economic system. However, more importantly, it will adjust its economic interventions to serve moral considerations which transcend the limits of mere economic development. Coleridge laments that modern democratic systems have been plagued by the dominance of narrow economic interests:

> It is this accursed practice of ever considering only what seems to be expedient for the occasion, disjoined from all principle or enlarged systems of action...which has led the colder hearted men to the study of political economy, which has turned our parliament into a real committee of public safety. In it is all power vested, and in a few years we shall either be governed by an aristocracy, or, what is still more likely, by a contemptible democratic oligarchy of glib economists, compared to which the worst form of aristocracy would be a blessing.[55]

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54. Lay Sermons, pp.223.

55. Coleridge, Table Talk, (New York: Harper, 1884), pp.318.

Coleridge insists that one of the responsibilities of the state is to provide a sovereign direction and governance of the nation which is based on a moral ethos. Politics must pursue a higher order of values than those determined by political economy. He begins his study of Church and State with this misquotation from Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida:

> There is a mystery in the soul of state,
> Which hath an operation more divine
> Than our mere chroniclers dare meddle with.[56]

Here Coleridge underlined a fundamental theme of the civic humanist tradition. Civic humanism operated with a far more exalted view of the state than that put forward by the liberal jurisprudence tradition. Coleridge adopted this political vision. He viewed the state as a moral organism which is geared to the pursuit of the good.[57] He contrasted this "idea of the state" found in the tradition stemming from Fincino and Mirandola to Harrington and Milton with dominance of the

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[56]. S.T.Coleridge, On the Constitution of the church and State According to the Idea of Each. "Mere chroniclers" is Coleridge's addition. It seems to be a swipe at utilitarian political theorists such as James Mill (p.12).

[57]. J.D.Coates, "Coleridge's Dept to Harrington", Journal of the History of Ideas, 38 (1977) pp.505-506.

"mechanico-corpuscular" theories of Paley and others.[58]

He underlined his break with the jurisprudence tradition in his reassertion of the importance of the teleological approach to the nature of the church and of the state. An appropriate theoretical approach to social theory and ecclesiology will go beyond a delineation of the most stable mode of administering and allocating offices, properties, and rights. It will attempt to identify the "idea" of each, that is, the "ultimate aim" of the church and the state:

> By an idea, I mean, (in this instance) that conception of a thing, which is not abstracted from any particular state, form, or mode, in which the thing may happen to exist at this or at that time; nor yet generalized from any number of succession of such forms or modes; but which is given by the knowledge of its ultimate aim.[59]

Ideas are the fundamental moral, religious, and

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58. On the Constitution of Church and State, pp.50-51. The acknowledgement of a line of continuity with the contributions of renaissance Italian theorists is quite typical in civic humanist circles. Harrington looked to Machiavelli as a key authority and he contended the Venetian republic was one of the few political communities in which classical civic humanism had been preserved. Coleridge also admired the tradition of republicanism in late medieval Italy. He writes that "the glories and the struggles of ancient Greece were acted over again in the proud republics of Venice, Genoa, and Florence".(8) J.G.A.Pocock suggests that civic humanism can be understood as the late arrival of Italian Renaissance humanism political to the English scene.

59. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.4.

philosophical principles which direct the thoughts, actions, and speech of rational beings. Coleridge was distressed by the dominance of utilitarian ethics in political discourse. A constant theme in Coleridge's later social and political writings is his insistence on the need to move beyond considerations of political expedience and economic utility to a more principled, value-laden form of political discourse. His concern for the development of this critical social and political ethic is the starting point for his appreciation of the role of the church in modern society.

B. The Mission of the National Church

Having emphasized the moral character of the problems of social and political development Coleridge also argued that the nature and function of the church must be redefined in the light of its relation to the task of the moral critique and reconstruction of society and economy. This redefinition is quite novel. This is not to say that there was no evidence of concern for social issues in previous Anglican church teaching. Soloway and Hilton document a significant body of "evangelical" clerical and lay reflection on social

issues in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Anglican tradition.[60] However, this extended social commentary did not argue for any basic redefinition of the nature and structures of the church in the light of its social mission. This redefinition is a fundamentally new insight and new emphasis for ecclesiology. Coleridge is notable for his contribution to this redefinition of ecclesiology in the Anglican tradition. Similar ecclesiological developments which underline the social mission of the church can be traced in other traditions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In Coleridge's thought the restructuring of ecclesiology in the light of the social mission of the Church is most evident in his reflections on the magisterial function of the Church. The church must nurture an enlightened civic ethos that will guide the ongoing reforming of society and polity. Enlightenment political action is based on paideia, that is, the existence of an educational order in the community. For Coleridge principled political discourse could not be divorced from moral and religious formation. There must

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60. R.A.Soloway, Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England 1783-1852, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Boyd Hilton, The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865.

be an interpenetration of theological and political discourse. Religious norms and values must have a space and a vehicle for expression in the political forum. For Coleridge the National Church was the institutional order which fulfilled this function of "cultivation" - the nurturing of an enlightened civic ethos.[61]

> The proper object and end of the national Church is civilization with freedom; and the duty of its ministers, could they be contemplated merely and exclusively as officiaries of the National Church, would be fulfilled in the communication of that degree and kind of knowledge to all, the passion of which is necessary for all in order to their civility. By civility I mean all the qualities essential to a citizen...It follows therefore...that its instructions should be fitted to diffuse through the people legality, that is, the obligations of a well-calculated self-interest, under the conditions of a common interest determined by common laws.[62]

One may wonder if there is anything distinctively Christian in this concept of the church. In his treatise On the Constitution of the Church and State Coleridge speaks extensively of the nature of the national church and its relation to culture and the state with barely a reference to Christ or any of the major doctrinal concerns of the Christian tradition. In fact, Coleridge, like Harrington, contends that there is

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61. See Stephen Prickett's comments on the Coleridge's view of the Church as an agent of cultivation in Romanticism and Religion, pp.68-9.

62. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.43.

nothing particularly Christian about his definition of the nature and mission of the Church. Coleridge firmly distinguished the "National Church" from the Christian Church. He stated that "any particular scheme of Theology derived and supposed (by its partizans) to be deduced from Christianity" is "no essential part of the Being of the National Church". The National Church might exist without the existence of the Christian Church, and, in fact has so existed in the pre-Christian era and in non-Christian civilizations.[63] He states that the "paramount end and purpose" of a National Church is "the continued and progressive civilization of the community".[64] Every political society needs a national church and clerisy as creative civilizing matrix for the enlightened political discourse and action. Thus, "in relation to the National Church, Christianity, or the Church of Church, is a blessed accident..."[65] When Coleridge takes up a discussion of the "Idea of the Christian Church" in an essay appended to his treatise we find that the "Christian Church" has no substantive relationship to the political realm.

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63. ibid., pp.44-5.

64. ibid., pp.97.

65. ibid., pp.44.

> The Christian Church is not a Kingdom, Realm (royaume), or State (sensu latiori) of the World, that is of the aggregate, or total number of the kingdoms, states, realm, or bodies politic...which, collectively taken, constitute the civilized world.[66]

The ecclesial dimension which concerns Coleridge impacts directly upon culture and politics. The Christian Church has a focus on individual personal salvation which leaves it in a tangential relation to culture and politics:

> the Christian Church dare not to be considered as a counter-pole to any particular State...The Christian Church, as such, has not nationality entrusted to its charge. It forms no counter-balance to the collective heritage of the realm. The phrase, Church and State, has a sense and a propriety in reference to the National Church alone.[67]

Coleridge points out that if we speak of the Christian Church as the "ecclesia" ("those called out of the world") then "this other [the national church] might more expressively have been entitled enclesia, or an order of men, chosen in and of the realm, and constituting an estate of that realm".[68]

In short, Coleridge's discussion of the educative function of the church was based on his theory that there was a natural (National) ecclesial dimension in

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66. ibid., pp.98.

67. ibid., pp.100.

68. ibid., pp.35.

human community that is essential to the progress of all civilized political cultures. Thus, Coleridge intentionally presents an ecclesiology that is not distinctively Christian.

C. The Task of Enlightenment: the Clerisy and Magisterial Authority in the Church

In exploring the ecclesiology of the National Church Coleridge was most concerned with the magisterial dimension of ecclesial life and the role of the Church in the ongoing cultivation of an enlightened public ethos. Indeed he presents this as the critical focus of his study On the Constitution of the Church and State.[69] Coleridge firmly rejected the traditional doctrines of the magisterial authority -i.e. the infallible authority of the Bible and/or of the Church in matters of doctrine. He equated the Protestant doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture with the "Romish tenet of Infallibility" in the Church and repudiated both as flawed views of the teaching function of the Church.

Coleridge's approach to the magisterial or educative function of the church is intimately linked to his hermeneutical approach to the role of key symbols

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[69]. ibid., pp.35.

("ideas") in development of culture and rational political, moral, and religious discourse. Recent years have seen a more appreciative assessment of the significance of Coleridge's contributions to hermeneutics.[70] E.S.Shaffer has shown that Coleridge was an astute student of the new tradition of "higher criticism" emerging in German scholarship and was "if not an innovator, one of its subtlelist exponents".[71] His contributions in this area represent a significant enrichment of the civic humanist tradition of discourse.

For Coleridge, "ideas", such as the idea of freedom, the good, justice, the church, or the state, are powerful ultimate principles which exist in and are constitutive of the realm of "persons". It is inappropriate to speak of things possessing or being possessed by an idea.[72] Ideas are the moral and

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70. John Coulson and Stephen Prickett stress the importance of Coleridge's hermeneutical theory of language and symbol: John Coulson, Newman and the Common Tradition and Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church .

71. E.S.Shaffer, Kubla Khan and the Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.1.

72. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.5-7.

religious values which are constitutive for human existence.

> They, in fact, constitute his humanity. For try to conceive a man without the ideas of God, eternity, freedom, will, absolute truth, of the good, the true, the beautiful, the infinite. An animal endowed with a memory of appearances and of facts might remain. But the man will have vanished...[73]

Fundamental moral and religious principles enlarge and elevate the soul and motivate it to a higher order of moral, religious, and political action.[74] Ideas are the stuff of human action and discourse as well as the focus for the human sciences. Moral, political, religious, and philosophical ideas do not refer to realities distinct from human existence but refer to those principles by which human personality and human community is ordered, formed, and reformed. They are not static concepts but the "living" values which generate "meaning" for human life.[75] These archetypal ideas are embodied in language, scripture, poetry, and tradition. The poetic or symbolic expressions of these ideas do not detract from the fact that they are primary expressions of human rationality. The poetic or symbolic expression of human reason is essential to the

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73. ibid., pp.36.

74. Lay Sermons, pp.23-24.

75. ibid., pp.23-24.

power of ideas in human culture.

> words are not things, they are Living Powers, by which things of most importance to mankind are actuated, combined and humanized.[76]

In the face of the Benthamite critique of religious beliefs and symbols as superstitious and irrelevant Coleridge argued that symbolism represented a depth level of human rationality. Romantics were critical of the attempt to identify rationality with abstract calculative rationalism of utilitarianism. They argued that reason leads to distortion when it is abstracted from other dimensions of human personality such as affection, religious feeling, imagination, and language. W.J.Bate points to an indirect influence of the Associationist school of psychology and its significance in laying the epistemological "groundwork" of the English Romantic movement.[77] In its emphasis upon the experiential dimensions of cognition it tended to be skeptical of the claims of abstract reason.[78] Developments within eighteenth-century associationist psychology led to a growing sense of the "irrationality

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[76]. S.T.Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1868), pp.116.

[77]. W.J.Bate, From Classic to Romantic, Premises of Taste in Eighteenth Century England, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), pp.94.

[78]. ibid., pp.93-94.

of the totally rational".[79] Romantics such as Coleridge attempted to provide a more integrated conception of the relationship between thought, feeling, and morality.[80]

For Coleridge this integration is effected by symbolism. "Reason" is "ordinarily expressed by Vision".[81] It is embodied in the visionary dimension of human life: religious symbol, myth, ritual, poetry, custom, and traditions. The symbol is the integrated sensuous and emotive expression of the "idea".

> In the Scriptures they [ideas] are the living educts of the Imagination; of that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the reason in Images of the Sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the Sense by the permanence and self-encircling energies of the Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors.[82]

In and through the symbol reason is brought to

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79. B.H.Bronson, "The Retreat from Reason", in Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture, vol.2, (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve Press, 1972) pp.235.

80. W.J.Bate, From Classic to Romantic, pp.130.

81. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.46.

82. Lay Sermons, pp.29. See L.C.Knight's discussion in "Idea and Symbol: Some Hints from Coleridge", Further Explorations (1965), pp.155-68 and M.Jadwiga Swiatecka, The Idea of the Symbol, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Swiatecka argues that Coleridge's contributions to the theory of symbolism set a standard which later 19th century studies fail to live up to (pp.170).

expression. It becomes a living historical force. However in its expressive form the symbol embodies moral and religious reason:

> [The Symbol] always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative.[83]

Foundational moral and political principles are wedded to symbolism. Since the most significant repository of symbolism lies in the religious experience of the community, therefore, morality, and politics is ineluctably linked to the religious vision of the community. The religious prophets and poets of the community provide an enriched social ethos that transcends the minimalist procedural norms generated by utilitarian ethics. Coleridge states that,

> the morality which the state requires in its citizens for its own well-being and ideal immortality, and without reference to their spiritual interests as individuals, can only exist for the people in the form of religion...In fine, Religion, true or false, is and ever has been the centre of gravity in a realm, to which all other things must and will accommodate themselves.[84]

Thus an ongoing appropriation of the symbols and mysteries of religion is a key element in the formation and enrichment of an enlightened civic ethos.

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83. Lay Sermons, pp.30.

84. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.53.

According to Coleridge the apprehension of "ideas" in their symbolic form must involve a different type of intellectual act than the comprehension of a "concept".[85] We comprehend a thing through "a conscious act of the understanding". Concepts are based on an analysis of the actual. We apprehend an "idea" through an act of "Reason" - the intellect in the act of "interpretation" rather than "analysis".

For Coleridge an enlightened exercise of this magisterial function of religion in culture has both a conservative and a revisionist bent. On the conservative side Coleridge resists any rationalistic program of demythologization. Stephen Prickett points out that Coleridge's hermeneutical approach was more tolerant and supportive of traditional symbols and doctrines than that of his German colleagues. Thus, while Coleridge will argue in his Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit that one must interpret scripture as one would interpret any text, nevertheless, he quickly reassures his readers that a recognition of the universality and depth of its symbols and doctrines will mitigate against any naive rationalism. As reason encounters these primordial symbols it attempts to intelligibly retrieve the content of these symbols.

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85. ibid., pp.4-5.

However, retrieval seems to be inescapably linked to revision. Coleridge prefers to use the term "idea" when referring to Christian doctrines (e.g. Coleridge speaks of the "idea of the Church" rather than the doctrine of the Church). An "idea" is not "actual" in a brute empirical way but it is a vision of a moral or religious goal which is "gradually realized" in the discourse and deeds of individuals and laws and institutions of societies.[86] These fundamental moral and religious principles are the stuff of "tradition" and historical development. "Ideas" are "living, productive, partaketh of infinity, and (as Bacon has sublimely observed) containeth an endless power of semination".[87] As such they are open to an ongoing process of revision and development. The unfolding ideas of revelation, the incarnation, or the church provide the impetus for an ongoing revision and reform of doctrine and practice rather than static continuity.[88]

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86. ibid., pp.9.

87. Lay Sermons, pp.23-24.

88. It is along these lines that Coleridge argues for the necessity for a fundamental revision of classical doctrines of Biblical authority. In his Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit proposes a flexible doctrine of inspiration - "It is the spirit of the Bible, and not the detached words and sentences, that is infallible and absolute". The Collected Works of Samuel

One of the primary goals of this ongoing task of interpretation is the enrichment of the level of discourse in the public realm. In redefining the relationship between Christian doctrine and culture Coleridge stressed the importance of the formation of an educated laity (the clerisy) for the life of both the church and the polis. Enlightenment social thought raised the concern that political discourse and action be self-conscious, coherent, and rational. In eighteenth-century liberalism enlightened political action was seen to be linked to the rational pursuit of individual self-interests. Self-interest was defined in a tangible way, i.e. one's properties (body, estates, assets, etc.). Thus the capacity for rational self-interested action was seen to be essentially linked to the possession and administration of property.

In nineteenth-century religious liberalism there was a shift away from the paradigm of possessive individualism towards the notion that enlightened action is a function of education. In this new emphasis on the critical role of education Coleridge does not repudiate the traditional civic humanist stress on the educative character of property, the administration of which

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Taylor Coleridge, vol.10, ed. John Colmer, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp.33-4, see footnote).

nurtures the "moral qualities of prudence, industry and self-control."[89] Thus for Coleridge, as for Arnold, the exercise of political power should still be linked to the possession of property.[90] However, more than the experience of proprietorship is needed to nurture a civic culture which promotes the civic virtues of enlightened freedom and responsibility. An enlightened civic culture is the product of an ongoing process of education and humanization. This task needs to be carried by a specific "corporation" or "estate" with its own institutions and resources.

Coleridge defines this "third estate" as the clerisy (in distinction from the mercantile and aristocratic estates of society). The clerisy is the creative matrix for the interpenetration of ecclesial and political discourse. It is responsible for generating an integrated public ethos or public philosophy which is grounded in the Christian vision yet responsive to the concerns of society and culture.

Coleridge shifts this critical magisterial function of the church in culture into the hands of this educated laity. He argued that this magisterial function

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89. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.71.

90. ibid., pp.71-2.

(Clerisy) was historically linked to the priesthood. However this sacerdotal character

> is to be considered as an accident of the age, a mis-growth of ignorance and oppression, a falsification of the constitutive principle, not a constituent part of the same.[91]

Having defined the Church in relation to its critical task in the sphere of social and political culture, Coleridge emphasizes the preeminent role of the laity in this sphere. Coulson states that,

> The need for an educated laity - this element common to church and society - to perform an essential function in the realizing and communication of Christian truth, and yet to be the creative centre or ethos of their society, and thus the form which Christian social and political commitment takes in particular circumstances - this need is at the heart of Coleridge's and Maurice's conception of the Church.[92]

The clerisy is composed of all those professions and institutions which are responsible for the "cultivation" of society, responsible for penetrating the culture with enlightenment and enriched meaning. The clerisy are the class of educators within the community.

> The Clerisy of the nation, or national church, in its primary acceptation and original intention comprehended the learned of all denominations...in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the

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91. ibid., pp.37.

92. Newman and the Common Tradition, pp.50.

Theological.[93]

However, within the learned professions the theological disciplines, or perhaps more accurately, the humanities, claim a real "precedence" since these disciplines deal with those critical realms of history, ethics, and the philosophy of "ideas":

> under the name of Theology, or Divinity, were contained the interpretation of languages; the conservation and tradition of past events; the momentous epochs, and revolutions of the race and nation; the continuation of the records; logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and lastly, the ground-knowledge, the prima scientia as it was named, - Philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas.[94]

Coleridge offers a number of arguments for the primacy of the humanities in the work of the clerisy. In the first place, it constitutes the humanizing and unifying matrix for knowledge.[95] The enterprise of knowledge is ordered according to human values and aspirations. Secondly, these disciplines are geared to the formation of the civil ethos of the "body politic" transforms men into citizens, "free subjects of the realm".[96] They

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93. On the Constitution of the Church and State, pp.36.

94. ibid., pp.36.

95. ibid., pp.37.

96. ibid., pp.37.

deal with the realm of human meaning, value, and virtue and are essential for the cultivation of enlightened discourse and action. "And lastly, because to divinity belong those fundamental truths, which are the common ground-work of our civil and our religious duties, not less indispensible to a right view of our temporal concerns, than to a rational faith respecting our immortal well-being."[97] The humanities, especially the theological disciplines, deal with those questions of ultimate concern which ground social and political ethics.

Coleridge lifted the work of the humanities to the status of a crucial ecclesial mission. It was with a missionary zeal that he called upon the clerisy to educate, nurture, and cultivate. Coleridge's vision profoundly influenced Anglican ecclesial identity for the next century.[98] Coleridge's disciples threw themselves into this educative mission. Thomas Arnold laboured in this field through his writings and his work in educational reform at Rugby. Frederick Denison Maurice, one of the founders of the Christian Socialist

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97. ibid., pp.48.

98. Ben Knight's study, The Idea of the Clerisy in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) illuminates the wider impact of this issue on 19th century social and political thought.

movement in England, spoke of the educative mission of the church as "the great trial of the age". He stated that "no political problem can be solved, unless it be solved".[99] Maurice's particular mission was to widen the work of the Clerisy to include the working classes. He founded working-class colleges which attempted to bring to the workers a broad-based liberal education which would fulfill one of the crucial preconditions for their participation within the political forum. Maurice's persevering dedication to this demanding and seemingly unfruitful missionary project was a testimony to the power and influence of Coleridge's vision in his thought and work. Coleridge's political and ecclesiological reflections signalled a major shift in the liberal Anglican approach to the nature and mission of the church in the world.

4. Conclusion

Coleridge's contributions brought the concerns of the civic humanist to bear on the revival of ecclesiological debate in early nineteenth-century England. In many ways Coleridge's insights into the

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[99]. F.D.Maurice, The Workman and the Franchise, (London: Alexander Strahan, 1866), pp.181.

teleological character of ethics, the moral ends of the state, and the need for civil religion or national church in the formation of a republican civic ethos, reflect civic humanist concerns. However, Coleridge also raised a new set of concerns and in responding to them pushed for a significant development of the civic humanist tradition. First, in Coleridge there is greater awareness of the complexity of the social dimension. Coleridge recognized the need to move beyond the pursuit of republican civic ethos to the development of a full-fledged social ethic. If politics is to exercise a moral sovereignty over society it will have to develop a social ethic capable of dealing with the critical issues in the economic sphere as well as the political sphere. The mission of the Church and Christian doctrine had to be redefined in relation to this task of generating a meaningful social ethic.

Secondly, there is the question of the relationship of the Church to culture. The modern concept of "culture" emerged during the nineteenth century and in English thought Coleridge was a critical player in the definition of this concept.[100] The concept illuminated the fact that human civilization goes beyond mere

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100. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950, (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), ch.3.

material accomplishment but entails the construction of a total "way of life" that embodies personal, social, and moral relationships, as well as artistic, literary, national, and religious meaning and self-expression. Human self-determination is expressed in its paradigmatic form in the creation of a culture. Culture was seen as a "court of human appeal" beyond purely economic and utilitarian policies.[101] Culture exerts a magisterial role in the evolution of society. It educates, integrates, and harmonizes the diverse aspects of personal and social existence. Accordingly, the magisterial function of the church had to be redefined in the light of the recognition of the critical function of culture.

Coleridge's work raised important new questions for ecclesiology. However, Coleridge's ecclesiological contributions were exclusively confined to the social, political, and cultural tasks that he defined for the mission of the Church. He paid little or no attention to the internal life of the Church. Coleridge was content with an exploration of the relationship of the church to the social mission of the state and to the ongoing task of culture and cultivation. There was little effort to explore the implications of the civic

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[101]. ibid., pp.17.

humanist tradition for the internal life of the Christian Church. In fact, he deliberately excused himself from such a discussion claiming that his reflections on the national church developed natural ecclesiology based on political wisdom and had no bearing on the "idea of a Christian Church" as such. However, the revived tradition of Anglican liberalism led by Thomas Arnold (including Julius Hare, Connop Thirwall, and A.P.Stanley) would break ranks with him on this point. While adhering to the basic thrust of his ecclesiological vision, Coleridge's major theological disciples would repudiate this sharp distinction between the National Church and Christian Church. However, Arnold was not in any fundamental disagreement with Coleridge's reflections on the National Church. Rather he found that Coleridge's "Idea of the Christian Church" represented a false spiritualization of the Christian Church. Coleridge's disciples refused to bracket out the "Christian Church". For Arnold the Christian Church would have to be explored in the light of the paradigm developed by Coleridge in his analysis of the National Church. Arnold wanted to make a more thorough-going application of these insights to the internal reform of the Church.

The contributions made by the second generation of

disciples attempted to reinforce the decisive significance of Coleridge's insights for ecclesiological debates of the nineteenth century. By bringing the critical concerns of the civic humanist tradition to bear on the discussion of the church and the state Coleridge inaugurated substantive ecclesiological reconstruction of the tradition of religious liberalism that went beyond the limits of the New Calvinist revision. Through Coleridge the tradition was offered a new vehicle of social and political theory to rethink, revise, and reinforce its basic ecclesiological commitments. In many ways the contributions of Coleridge and his Liberal Anglican disciples would anticipate later developments in late nineteenth-century political liberalism.[102]

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[102]. Nancy L.Rosenblum presents a thematic overview of the impact of romanticism upon the liberal tradition in her study, Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). She looks at the implications of romantic concepts of community, virtue, its accent on excellence, and cultivation, for the tradition of liberal thought. The later liberal emphasis on ethics, social reform, and the role of the state is found in the work of Mill, Green, and Hobson. For historical overviews of this development in the tradition of political liberalism see Michael Freeden, The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), and Peter Clarke, Liberals and Social Democrats (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978)

CHAPTER X

THOMAS ARNOLD: CHURCH AND THE MORAL TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

In Meriol Trevor's study Thomas Arnold and his sons are portrayed as a mirror of the complex and dynamic transformations that took place within nineteenth-century Victorian religious culture.[1] Arnold's eldest son Matthew became the Northrop Frye of late nineteenth-century English culture. He was a humanist, romantic, and literary critic who contributed to nineteenth-century controversies over the authority and interpretation of the Bible. His youngest son followed Newman into the Roman Catholic Church.

Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) made a decisive personal contribution to the development of the tradition of English religious liberalism. Arnold was an aggressively "Christian" liberal who argued that his proposals for a liberal reconstruction of the church would be the key to the revival and expansion of Christianity rather than its domestic accommodation to civil society. Through his pioneering work in educational reform at Rugby, Arnold anticipated

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[1]. Meriol Trevor, The Arnolds (London: The Bodley Head, 1973).

Kingsley's Victorian ideal of a "muscular" Christianity with its emphasis on providing an education that would raise up a generation of Christian young men strong in body, mind, and spirit - men capable of actively engaging modern culture and working for its transformation.[2] His English Christian liberalism was coloured by spirit of imperialistic self-assurance characteristic of the Victorian era. Despite the important intellectual role Coleridge played in the redirection of English religious liberalism, nevertheless, it was the young outspoken Thomas Arnold, not the metaphysical "opium-eating" Coleridge, who is honored as the patriarch of modern liberal Anglicanism.

However, despite Arnold's unabashed liberalism he expressed strong dissatisfaction with the limitations of the ecclesiological heritage bequeathed by the Latitudinarian tradition of English liberalism. Arnold and the "Trinity Liberals" at Cambridge, such as Julius Hare and Connop Thirwall, parted company with the Oriel Noetics at Oxford who struggled to carry on the

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[2]. See Norman Vance's interpretation of this theme in nineteenth-century English religious thought, Sinews of the Spirit: the Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Latitudinarian inheritance. [3]

Part of Arnold's dissatisfaction was due to the impact of civic humanist concerns in his intellectual formation. These concerns were transmitted to Arnold through the English Romantic movement. The Lake Poets (Coleridge and Wordsworth) had a major influence on Arnold's approach to scripture, church, and state.[4] Although I cannot find evidence of any direct dependence of Arnold on the work of Harrington himself, nevertheless, through Coleridge and Wordsworth Arnold appropriated critical elements of the romantic and civic humanist critique of the jurisprudence tradition. With this material he was able to effect a major revision and redirection of liberal ecclesiological reflection. As Basil Wiley stated, in Arnold the Coleridgean theory of church and state became "a programme of action".[5]

Arnold's theological contributions also reflect the early nineteenth-century liberal dialogue with

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[3]. Richard Brent provides an interesting discussion of the theological positions of these two schools of thought: "The Theological Origins of Liberal Anglicanism: Oriel Noetics and Trinity Liberals", chapter four in Liberal Anglican Politics, pp.144-183.

[4]. Williamson discusses Arnold's debts in The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, "Arnold and the Lake Poets", pp.40-52.

[5]. Basil Wiley, Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Arnold (Harmondsworth: Penguin), pp.53.

and accommodation to pietist concerns similar to that found in the New Calvinist movement. However, Arnold has none of Erskine's ecclesiological reticence. In Arnold's work we see restoration of political and ecclesiastical issues to center stage in liberal religious thought. In his historical works we find a Harringtonian fascination for the political achievements of the classical Greek and Roman republics.[6] Arnold admired the classical moral theory of the state, its teleological approach in ethics, and its insistence on the intimate connection between religious and civic life.[7] The political and civic humanist bent of his thought is also indicated in his profound admiration for and study of Aristotle's Politics and Ethics and

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[6]. Thomas Arnold, Thucydides (ed.) 3 vols., (London: G.Bell, 1880-81); History of Rome 3 vols., (1838-43); History of the Later Roman Commonwealth 2 vols., (London: B.Fellowes, 1845-46); Introductory Lectures on Modern History (London: B.Fellowes, 1843).

[7]. Arnold argues that his work on Thucydides has a direct relevance to modern debates since it illuminates a critical principle of authentic political community: "Now to those who think that political society was ordained for higher purposes than those of mere police or traffic, the principle of the ancient commonwealths in making agreement in religion and morals the test of citizenship cannot but appear wise and good." "Preface to the Third Volume of Thucydides", in Miscellaneous Works, (New York: D.Appleton and Co., 1845), pp.336.

Thucydides's History.[8] Through his historical work in this area Arnold displayed a far stronger interest in the classical sources of the civic humanist tradition than did his mentor Coleridge.

This political bent in Arnold's intellectual interests found another major outlet in his life-long concern for the reconstruction of ecclesiology. While Erskine had kept an arms-length distance from the ecclesiological revivalism of the 1830's and 40's Arnold plunged into it. Arnold fully agreed with Newman that "the revival of the Church of Christ in its full perfection, to be the one great effort to which all our efforts should be directed."[9] His premature death cut short his plans for a major treatise on the doctrine of the church. However, the rough contours of his ecclesiology are scattered throughout his extensive writing on the Church question.[10]

Arnold shared the Tractarian dissatisfaction with

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8. A.P.Stanley, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), vol.1, pp.30.

9. Arnold's review of "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, pp.236.

10. Thomas Arnold, Principles of Church Reform, (London: SPCK, 1962), Fragment on the Church, (London: B.Fellowes, 1863), and his numerous essays in his Miscellaneous Works, such as "The Church", "Christian Politics", "The Church of England".

the poverty of ecclesiological vision in Latitudinarianism. He had strong sympathies with the movement of "ecclesiological" revivalism of the 1830s and its concern for the restoration and renewal of the Christian Church in the modern world. He concurred with Newman's characterization of the early nineteenth century as a "movement" towards "something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century".[11] He shared the Tractarian concern for a vibrant resurgence of the pastoral, sacramental, and catechetical life of the church. He even recognized with the Tractarians that the revival of Christianity will be promoted in part by a retrieval of the treasures of ecclesial practice deposited by the cumulative historical experience of the "Catholic" tradition:

> The true church of Christ would offer to every faculty of our nature its proper exercise, and would entirely meet all our wants. No wise man doubts that the Reformation was imperfect, or that in the Romish system there were many good institutions, and practices, and feelings, which it would be most desirable to restore amongst ourselves. Daily church services, frequent communions, memorials of our Christian calling continually presented to our notice, in crosses and way-side oratories; commemorations of holy men, of all times and countries; the doctrine of the communion of saints practically taught; religious orders, especially of women, of different kinds, and under different rules, delivered only from the snare and sin of perpetual vows; - all

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11. Arnold, "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, pp.236.

> these...belong no less to the true church, and would there be beneficial.[12]

However, Arnold fought hard against Newman's attempt to channel this ecclesiological revival along Tractarian lines.[13] He argued that the ecclesiological principles of the High Church strategy of revival were "delusive".[14] In the face of the resurgence of conservative orthodoxy in the Tractarian Movement during the 1830s Arnold persevered as one of the sole champions of a revival of religious liberalism. Debates between the two camps were heated and at times bitter.[15]

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12. ibid., pp.260.

13. ibid., pp.258-9.

14. ibid., pp.238ff. "On the whole...the movement in the church, excited by Mr.Newman and his friends, appears to be made in a false direction, and to be incapable of satisfying the feeling which prompted it". (pp.251)

15. When the liberal theologian Renn Dickson Hampden faced stern opposition to his appointment as Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford Arnold rushed to his defense with an angry denunciation of the moral wickedness and manipulations of the proponents of "priestcraft" at Oxford. "The Oxford Malignants and Dr.Hampden", Edinburgh Review, 63 (1836) pp.225-239. The tone of this essay was so violent that it embarrassed even Arnold's most loyal disciples (e.g. A.P. Stanley, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884, vol.2, pp.19-20). Meriol Trevor provides a good discussion of relations between Arnold and Newman in The Arnolds (London: Bodley Head, 1973) pp.36-46). Newman was to have another important skirmish with Arnold's brand of liberalism in his famous debate with Charles Kingsley (John Coulson, "The Apologia Revisited" in Newman: A Portrait Restored (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965).

His own sense of missionary zeal for the need to effect a penetration of Christianity into modern culture served to intensify his opposition to strategies which he perceived to be reactionary and counter-productive.[16]

Thus, Arnold's concern for ecclesial revival did not signal any wavering in his allegiance to the tradition of religious liberalism. Indeed, in his revision of religious liberalism he attempted to upgrade and strengthen the liberal assault on ecclesiasticism, clericalism, authoritarianism, and doctrinalism. Arnold did recognize fundamental inadequacies in the Latitudinarian paradigm of eighteenth-century religious liberalism. However, he argued that the ecclesiological errors that Latitudinarianism ran into were the "inevitable fruit" of the fact that it attempted to reconstruct the concept of the church in a highly distorted theological and ecclesiastical environment. Arnold attributes this fundamental distortion of the theory and practice of the church to the "long

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16. Newman was Arnold's chief target in the theological controversies of the 1830's. He usually referred to the Tractarians as the "Newmanites". Arnold's aggressive repudiation of Newman's theology was not seriously moderated even after he finally met with Newman in 1842 and realized that Newman was not the "dissimulating hypocrite" that he had expected. After a fairly warm and friendly encounter he wrote to a friend that "it would not do well to meet Newman too often" since it might interfere with the battle against "Newmanism". (Meriol Trevor, The Arnolds, pp.43).

ascendancy" of ecclesiological approaches based on principles similar to "Mr.Newman's principles".[17] The flawed character of the various Latitudinarian theories of church reflected the profound difficulties of reconstruction in the midst of a seriously distorted ecclesiological environment.

> "Christ's Church had been destroyed so long and so completely, that its very idea was all but lost, and to revive it was actually impossible".[18]

What was the fatal flaw that had so ravaged the discipline of ecclesiology? Arnold argues that the key error "utterly inconsistent" with a true "notion of a perfect Church" was the tendency to take "parts of human life out of its control...by a pretended distinction between spiritual things and secular".[19] This distinction between the secular and the sacred, the natural and supernatural, was a basic principle for traditional ecclesiological reflection and practice. However, it was erroneous:

> a distinction utterly without foundation, for in one sense all things are secular, for they are done in time and on earth; in another, all things are spiritual, for they affect us morally either for the better or the worse, and so tend to make our

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17. Arnold, "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, pp.253-4.

18. ibid., pp.253-4.

19. Arnold, "The Church", Miscellaneous Works, pp.14-15.

> spirits fitter for the society of God or of his enemies. The division rests entirely on principles of heathenism, and tends to make Christianity, like the religions of the old world, not a sovereign discipline, for every part and act of life, but a system for communicating certain abstract truths, and for the performance of certain visible rites and ceremonies.[20]

Arnold attempted to correct this error with his idea of the "common life". Arnold employs this concept to articulate a critical development in the nineteenth-century revision of religious liberalism, namely, the emergence of the concept of immanence. The doctrine of immanence allowed liberalism to come to terms with the pietist accent on the centrality of religious experience as well as the need for a reappropriation of the major theological concerns of the Christian tradition. However, it achieved this without buying into the traditional concept of the supernatural. M.H.Abrams attributes this shift to the impact of the Romantic tradition. Romanticism effected both a restoration and a radical reinterpretation of the theological heritage of Christianity:

> A conspicuous Romantic tendency, after the rationalism and decorum of the Enlightenment, was a reversion to the stark drama and suprarational mysteries of the Christian story and doctrines and to the violent conflicts and abrupt reversals of the Christian inner life...But since they lived, inescapably, after the Enlightenment, Romantic writers revived these ancient matters with a

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[20]. ibid., pp.14-15.

difference.[21]

Abrams explains this "difference" through the use of Carlyle's concept of "natural supernaturalism". He states that "the general tendency was, in diverse degrees and ways, to naturalize the supernatural and to humanize the divine".[22] Abrams argues that this was a form of "secularization" whereby theological ideas were assimilated and reformulated to provide an enriched interpretation of human experience.[23]

This notion of the immanence of the divine is critical to Arnold's approach. He argued that there is no strict separation of the sacred and the profane in Christian religious experience. Authentic human experience is spiritual. The Wesleyan concept of an exclusively Christian "supernatural" religious experience is jettisoned. Arnold offers an immanentist interpretation of the religious life of the primitive Apostolic era:

> The direct object of Christian cooperation was to bring Christ into every part of common life; in scriptural language, to make human society one living body, closely joined in communion with Christ, its head. And for this purpose, one of the

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21. M.H.Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature, (New York: W.W.Norton, 1971), pp.66.

22. ibid., pp.68.

23. ibid., pp.12-13.

> simplest acts of natural necessity was connected with the very deepest things of religion: - the meal of an assembly of Christians was made the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. And the early church well entered into the spirit of this ordinance, when it began every day by a partaking of the holy communion. For when Christ was thus brought into one of the commonest acts of nature and of common society, it was a lively lesson, that in every other act through the day, he should be made present also: if Christians at their very social meal could enter into the highest spiritual communion, it taught them that in all matters of life, even when separated from one another bodily, that same communion should be preserved inviolate; that in all things they were working for and with one another, with and to Christ and God.[24]

The Christian community must, in its practice, embody this theology of immanence if it is to authentically reflect the true character of Apostolic experience. However, according to Arnold we are burdened with a highly distorted Christian history. The post-apostolic era generally abandoned this innovative religious vision. Medieval and early modern ecclesiologies were built on a distinction between nature and supernature that subverted the theology and praxis of the early Christian era. Major moral, spiritual, theological, and ecclesiological corrections were necessary if there was to be a meaningful integration and revival of Christian experience in the modern world.

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[24]. "The Church", Miscellaneous Works (New York, 1845), pp.12-13.

> This distinction striking as with a two-edged sword, and pulling asunder what God had joined, made common life profane and religious life formal and superstitious; - for what are all our business and our studies but profane, if not done in Christ's name? and what are our acts of religion but the extremist folly and falsehood, if they are not made to act upon our common life? Every act of a Christian is at once secular and spiritual: - secular, inasmuch as it is done in the body, in time, and on earth; - spiritual, as it proceeds from the mind and the heart, and therefore affects the soul, and reaches on to eternity.[25]

The penetration of this error (the distinction between the secular and the spiritual) led to four major false dichotomizations of religious life which were in need of correction: the split between church and state, clergy and laity, doctrine and our common moral life, and the separation of ecclesiology and social ethics. Arnold's work can be interpreted as an attempt to address and rectify these ecclesiological distortions.

I. Church and State:

Arnold argued that any segregation of church and state into autonomous sacred and political realms represented a flawed isolation of religious and social life. It created a reified de-humanized religious sphere which was severed from its authentic connection

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25. Miscellaneous Works (New York, 1845), pp.504.

to common moral and political life.[26] In turn political life was reified into the laissez-faire state dealing with temporal material goods. Jure divino theories of church and state reflect this false dichotomization of the secular and the spiritual. In practice this leads to an unfortunate fragmentation of communal life. Religious, political and moral life drift off into their own spheres of autonomous existence.[27] These spheres of life lose their intrinsic inter-connectedness.

For Arnold the soft underbelly of liberal jurisprudence was its insistence on limiting the state to pursuit of purely mundane goods.[28] Arnold's ecclesiology was developed in tandem with the more dynamic view of the role of the political community provided by the civic humanist tradition. He argued that the state is a cooperative democratic society which aims at the total human good. Accordingly, in a

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26. "The Church", Miscellaneous Works, pp.14-15.

27. E.Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.131.

28. See ch.6, footnote 18. Arnold contended the Oriel school of liberalism adhered to the Latitudinarian theory of the state (see his critique of Whately in his Appendix to his Inaugural Lecture in Introductory Lectures on Modern History). Whately and Hawkins acknowledged their disagreement with Arnold's theory of church and state (Gloyn, The Church in the Social Order, pp.94).

Christian culture the state should be responsible for pursuing the moral and religious aspirations of the Christian community.

Arnold launched a "protest against that wretched doctrine of Warburton that the State has only to look after body and goods."[29] He argued that a true appreciation of the essential attribute of the state - its "sovereignty" - entails a recognition that the power of the state extends over all human activity and all human aspirations:

> An authority, then, so essentially sovereign over human life, controlling everything, and itself subject to no earthly control, must naturally have a proportionate responsibility...The doctrine of the old philosophers [Aristotle, Plato] is surely better in accordance with its sovereignty. they taught that as its power extended over the whole of human life, so human happiness, in the largest sense of the word, was its proper object; not physical happiness only, and much less the prevention of outward violence, but that compound happiness which belongs to man as a compound being, - the happiness conferred by wisdom and virtue, no less the comfort which is derived from food and clothing.[30]

Arnold argued that the object or telos of both the Church and the state were one and the same - "the highest welfare of man". He pointed out that this

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29. Arnold, Life, vol.2, pp.137; see Arnold's lengthy critique of Warburton's theory in his response to Whately, "The State and the Church", Miscellaneous Works, pp.457-496;

30. Miscellaneous Works, pp.458-9.

teleological ethical approach to political and ecclesial life was a position central to the work of a tradition of Anglican reflection from Hooker through Burke to Coleridge. Both the wisdom of the Church and the sovereign power of the state are needed to realize the "highest welfare of man". [31]

For Arnold this goal is most adequately pursued in the context of one integrated society not two. In a Christian society there should be a mutual interpenetration of the ecclesial and the political:

> the State's sovereign power...chooses for itself the true religion, as it would choose also the truest system of political science in the lower sense of the term; and in adopting this religion...it declares itself Christian...it becomes part of Christ's Holy Catholic Church: not allied with it, which implies distinctness from it, but transformed into it...The spirit of the Church is transfused into a more perfect body, and its former external organization dies away. The form is that of the State, the spirit is that of the Church...in the sense in which "Church" denotes the outward and social organization of Christians in any one particular place, it is no longer a Christian Church, but what is far higher and better, a Christian Kingdom.[32]

Thus, Arnold argued for "the perfect identification of Christian with political society".[33] This "perfect identification" would go far beyond the juridical

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[31]. Life, I, pp.204

[32]. Miscellaneous Works, pp.463-4.

[33]. Life, I, pp.204-5.

integration of the Church evident in some forms of Latitudinarian Erastianism.

> he ergon of a Christian State and Church is absolutely one and the same; nor can a difference be made out which shall not impair the Christian character of one or both; as, e.g. the ergon of the State be made to be merely physical or economical good, or that of the Church be made to be the performing of a ritual service.[34]

Any bifurcation of this unity between the Christian Church and the State leads to an anomalous political and ecclesial situation. A perverse relationship emerges in which a "Catholic" ecclesiology, which defines the Church as a jure divino institution (Apostolic succession, doctrine of the priesthood, sacraments, etc.), is pitted against a "laissez-faire" political economy which restricts the object of the state to provision for "men's bodies and goods" and insists on a strict separation of political and religious life.[35] The result is that both Church and State are deflected from their fundamental moral goals:

> while the first doctrine demoralizes the idea of the Church by making it a system ritual rather than moral, and mystic rather than spiritual, so the second doctrine demoralizes the idea of the State, by making it a contrivance for man's physical welfare only. And thus the Church and State, which if the true moral character of each be upheld are

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[34]. Arnold, Life, vol.2, pp.133.

[35]. "Christian Politics", Miscellaneous Works, pp.492-3.

> perfectly identical, are necessarily separated when each is made to assume a false and unworthy character, of superstition on the one hand, and of the lowest worldliness on the other.[36]

Arnold argues that this demoralized approach to both Church and state has become deeply rooted in Christian culture.

> So deeply is the distinction between the Church and the State seated in our laws, our language, and our very notions, that nothing less than a miraculous interpositions of God's providence seems capable within any definite time of eradicating it.[37]

It is not insignificant that this passage is found in Arnold's Preface to his History of Rome. His extensive study of the Greek and Roman history was due in large part to his admiration of the profound unification of the religious and the political within their commonwealths.[38] The classical tradition of civic humanism provided a more vibrant model of the relationship between religion and politics than that of the Christian tradition which, ironically, he continually condemned as "heathen" in its bifurcation of church and state.

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36. ibid., pp.493.

37. Preface to the History of Rome, I, vi; Life I, 207.

38. Life, I, pp.204-5.

2. Ecclesiastical Authority and the Laity:

Arnold was vehement in his repudiation of any form of high church ecclesiology, or, as he labels it, "High Church fanaticism".[39] Church structures are the product of human prudence, not divine law.[40]

> "the church is not a revelation concerning the unchangeable and eternal God, but an institution to enable changeable man to apprehend the unchangeable. Because man is changeable, the church is also changeable; changeable not in its object, which is for ever one and the same, but in its means for effecting that object.[41]

Arnold argues that the "questions of church government" are ones that should be decided by "political or moral considerations" rather than by appeal to a supposed "jure divino" model in scripture or tradition.[42] He rejects both Protestant biblicist concepts of church order and Catholic sacerdotalism. He states that there is a need to "reclaim questions on church government to the dominion of political questions."[43]

He argues that Jure divino concepts of church

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39. "The Oxford Malignants", Miscellaneous Works, pp.141.

40. ibid., pp.483.

41. ibid., pp.254.

42. Introductory Lectures on Modern History (New York: D.Appleton and Co., 2nd ed. 1845), pp.262-3.

43. ibid., pp.263.

government, whether papal, episcopal, or presbyterian, radically pervert the true character of church and state.[44] There was a reification of the church into a static sacral institution focussed on the pursuit of purely "spiritual" concerns. It entailed a false concept of ecclesiastical authority and a perverse distinction between clergy and laity. Such approaches lead to an extreme form of centralization whereby the fulcrum of moral authority in the community is shifted into the hands of an ecclesiastical body.[45] For Arnold there was never "an error more deeply mischievous" than the concept of a sacred ecclesial authority.[46]

The distorted centralization of religious authority in ecclesiasticism is a product of the fractured character of communal life. One expression of this bifurcation of communal life is clerical "exclusivism": "the substitution of the activity of some in place of the activity of all".[47] Arnold's ecclesiology strongly underlines the civic humanist insistence on the need for an active and participatory citizenry. However, he

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44. Miscellaneous Works, pp.535.

45. "National Church Establishments", Miscellaneous Works, pp.503-504.

46. ibid., pp.473.

47. ibid., pp.15.

contends that there has been a marked tendency to subvert this principle of the active dynamic cooperation and participation of the laity in ecclesial life and to substitute in its place a juridical "system in which a very few should be active and the great mass passive".[48] In Principles of Church Reform Arnold states that the laity "never act as a body, nor feel as a body...the people are, as members of the Church, wholly passive; - the love of self-government, one of the best instincts of our nature...finds no place for its exercise".[49]

This subversion is due to two reasons. First, there is a natural paternalistic bent in governmental authority, ecclesial or political, which, as it "acts for" its citizenry, tends to accrue power to itself thus lulling the public into passive inactivity.[50] Though government is a "beneficent and necessary" dimension of political and ecclesial life, nevertheless it can err "in the excess or in the unseasonableness of its activity".[51]

The second factor in undermining this vibrant civic humanist ethos in the life of the Church was far more

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48. ibid., pp.14.

49. Principles of Church Reform, pp.122.

50. Miscellaneous Works, pp.15.

51. ibid., pp.16.

fatal for ecclesiology and ecclesial life. It was the emergence of the principle and the practice of "priesthood".[52] Arnold's writings, like Harrington's, bristle with polemic against the priesthood. While Arnold insists that religious liberalism must press for the revival and revitalization of the Christian Church, this particular dimension of the tradition he "wholly repudiates".[53] For Arnold it is the concept of the Priesthood, not the doctrine of the Papacy, which is the fundamental error in all variants of Catholic ecclesiology.

Arnold, like Coleridge, wants to put forward a "high" view of the nature of the church. He adopts a "high" view in the sense that he sees the church as having a "theological" character. It is fundamentally related to salvation. Thus Arnold accepts the traditional "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" doctrine as a "most divine truth".[54] However, he insists that his recognition of the theological nature of the church does not entail any acknowledgement of the validity of the "priestly" dimension:

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[52]. ibid., pp.16-32; 68-72.

[53]. Arnold, "The Church", Miscellaneous Works, pp.20.

[54]. Arnold, "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, pp.262-3, see footnote.

> Is it not rather assuming the question to call my views low, and the opposite ones high. You know that I urge the authority of St.Paul for reversing the epithets, according to his language in the Epistle to the Galatians. Neither are my opinions properly low as to Church authority. I am for High Church, but no Priest; that is, I no more entertain a low sense of the Church, by denying the right and power of the Priesthood, than I entertain a low sense of the State or of Law, because I deny the authority of turannides, or of those oligarchies which Aristotle calls dunasteiai.[55]

Arnold points out that his stance in is accord with that of Coleridge. He introduces his critical review of the "Tracts for the Times" with a quote from Coleridge's Literary Remains which confirms his critique. Coleridge states,

> As far as the principle on which Archbishop Laud and his followers acted went to reactuate the idea of the Church, as a coordinate and living power by right of Christ's institution and express promise, I go along with them; but I soon discover that by the Church, they meant the clergy, the hierarchy exclusively, and then I fly off from them in a tangent. For it is this very interpretation of the Church, that, according to my conviction, constituted the first and fundamental apostasy; and I hold it for one of the greatest mistakes of our polemic divines, in their controversies with the Romanists, that they trace all the corruptions of the gospel faith to the Papacy.[56]

Arnold developed and sharpened this critique. He argued that concept of the priesthood radically

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55. Arnold, Life, vol.2, pp.265.

56. Arnold, "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, pp.237. This article is also the introduction to the fourth volume of Arnold's Sermons, Christian Life, its Course, its Hindrances, and its Helps.

undermines and "desecrates" the true notion of the church.[57] The restriction of the Church to a neatly defined set of structures, rituals, or offices undermines the dynamism of ecclesial life. Arnold argues that the communal life of the Church of England had been "unduly narrowed" and deflected from its true character insofar as it has organized itself on the ecclesiastical priesthood model:

> When we speak of the actual Church, at least of the Established Church, as a society, we give it a title which the reality will scarcely warrant. The social character has been lost sight of, because the ministry has been corrupted into a priesthood, and has thus almost monopolized the active functions of the whole body...if, in short, the whole business of the body, be it much or little, is delegated to them exclusively, then the excellences and uses of a society are forfeited; we lose not only its freedom, but its energy; we have no longer the combined action of many, contributing their varied powers and their joint interest to the promotion of the common good, - but the isolated power of a few, acting sometimes violently, but always imperfectly, upon a mass in itself inert and neutral.[58]

One of the fundamental planks of Arnold's program of Church Reform was the revival of active lay participation in the life of the Church.[59] The longstanding disenfranchisement of the laity needs to be

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57. ibid., pp.16-19.

58. ibid., pp.448-449.

59. See his proposals in section 2 of his Principles of Church Reform, (London, SPCK, 1962).

corrected:

> It is the invention of the human priesthood, which, falling in, unhappily, with the absolute power rightfully vested in the Christian Church during the troubles of the second century...in the end destroyed the Church...the clergy began to draw to themselves the attributes of the church...the great majority of the members of the church were virtually disenfranchised; the minority retained the name [the church], but the character of the institution was utterly corrupted. To revive Christ's church, therefore, is to expel the antichrist of priesthood...and to restore its disenfranchised members, - the laity, - to the discharge of their proper duties in it, and to the consciousness of their paramount importance; and all who value the inestimable blessings of Christ's church should labour in arousing the laity to a sense of their great share in them.[60]

Arnold wanted to arouse, activate, enfranchise the laity of the church. He argued that "the most essential step" in reform of the ministry and the basis for "every other improvement in the Church, consists in giving the laity a greater share in the ordinary government [of the Church]".[61] He demanded a far more politically participatory and active form of ecclesiastical polity than that called for in either Latitudinarian or Tractarian ecclesiology. This was a major ramification of Arnold's injection of civic humanist concerns into liberal ecclesiology. Questions such as lay participation and the democratization of the church were

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[60]. Arnold, "Tracts for the Times", Miscellaneous Works, pp.258.

[61]. Principles of Church Reform, pp.120.

largely non-issues for Latitudinarian ecclesiology. Nor were these issues adequately developed in Coleridge's reflections on the nature of the Church. However, in Arnold's paradigm, as in Harrington's, these concerns surge to the forefront as the critical issues in ecclesial reform. Arnold's specific proposals outlined in his Principles of Church Reform were based on this vision of a vibrant political and ecclesial forum governed by an active political and ecclesial citizenry.

3. Doctrine and Culture

Arnold, like Coleridge, struggled to find a way beyond the Latitudinarian relativization and privatization of doctrine.[62] In Latitudinarianism the recognition of the historical and subjective dimension of all fundamental religious truths led to the conclusion that there was no authoritative science of sacred doctrine. There were minimal moral standards which were universal, however, each individual must adopt his or her own particular theological commitments. Accordingly, academic theological studies would be largely neutral, historical, and descriptive rather than evaluative in content.

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62. Arnold, Principles of Church Reform, pp.149.

In contrast to the Latitudinarian approach Arnold affirmed the nineteenth-century movement towards a restoration of the discipline of theology. He underlined the need for each age to creatively forge its own systematic theological response according to its own, albeit limited, criteria of rationality. Public theological commitments are necessary though they are tentative and open to ongoing revision. In stressing the importance of adopting a coherent normative theological stance Arnold argued that a rigorous and creative interpretation of biblical theology was needed to face the rigour and systematization of traditional doctrinal interpretations whether High Church or Evangelical. Latitudinarian relativism surrendered the opportunity of developing a creative new theological synthesis. Liberalism must be capable of defining its theological position and defending its own system of "true doctrine".

> It has grieved me much to find that some of my own friends, whilst they acquit me of any such intention, consider the tendency of my Church Reform plan as latitudinarian in point of doctrine. Now my belief is, that it would have precisely the contrary effect, and would tend ultimately to a much greater unity and strictness in true doctrine; that is to say, in those views of God's dealings and dispositions towards us, and of our consequent duties towards Him, which constitute, I imagine,

the essence of the Gospel Revelation.[63]

In abandoning the Latitudinarian strategy of neutralizing doctrine Arnold called for a systematic reconstruction of Christian doctrine as a "divine practical lesson". Arnold argued that ecclesial doctrine had been deflected from its necessary connection to common moral life and turned into a collection of authoritative "sacred facts". He argued that traditional doctrinal approaches to truth promoted a serious fragmentation and reification of communal life through a false supernaturalism. Doctrine was relegated to an artificially constructed realm of the sacred. For Arnold traditional patterns of doctrinalization undermined the moral force and influence of Biblical truths on communal life. The deflection of Christian discourse into the traditional doctrinal mode distorts it into a weapon of propositional controversy rather than a tool of moral transformation.[64] A reinterpretation of Christian doctrine would help reconnect it to its original task in the ongoing transformation of the moral culture and ethos of society.

He dismissed the Latitudinarian attempt to

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63. Life, I, pp.313; see his comments in Principles of Church Reform, pp.149-150.

64. Miscellaneous Works, pp.457.

relativize and neutralize theological discourse arguing that it was an ineffective way of responding to the disruptive impact of traditional doctrinal ideologies upon public discourse. Arnold repudiated the Latitudinarian strategy of privatizing doctrine. He contended that Christian truths should have a practical moral and political impact on the transformation of culture.

Christian doctrine could have a positive efficacious impact on public discourse if it was revitalized through reestablishing its essential inner connection to moral life. Arnold wanted to forge a strong doctrinal stance which would highlight this moral core of the major Christian doctrines. For Arnold the moral dimension is a universal dimension of human life. It is historical and open to ongoing reformulation. Therefore, this strategy would put to bed the claims for the uniqueness, exclusivity, or supernatural character, of Christian doctrine. However, it would also provide the basis for a systematic revision, reinterpretation, and reappropriation of the classical Christian doctrines of grace, atonement, and salvation. Christian doctrine would be interpreted through the lens of the moral dimension of human existence.

Thus Arnold argued for a new definition of the

nature and function of doctrine. The true focus of Christian discourse must be geared to personal and communal transformation. The fundamental goal of Christian discourse is not the establishment of propositional truths, rather it is to motivate, exhort, and encourage.[65]

> The Church has unduly limited and unduly extended its notions of Christian doctrine...it has been limited and extended unduly, because its nature has been mistaken, because its predominant character has been supposed to be "truth", whereas it is in fact, "efficacy as a means of moral good".[66]

Arnold picks up a somewhat "evangelical" theme, that doctrine must be practical, pragmatic, and relevant to experience.

> The object of Christianity is to save men's souls; and as this can only be done by changing them from evil to good; by altering their hopes and fears, and affections; so, the immediate object of Christianity is, to produce in men a moral and spiritual improvement.[67]

Arnold's liberal reinterpretation of the moral significance of Christian doctrines and symbols was worked out primarily in the field of biblical theology. In this turn to biblical theology Arnold reinforced an important emphasis found both in early English Liberal (the Tew school) as well as in Pietist traditions of

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65. ibid., pp.450.

66. ibid., pp.449.

67. ibid., pp.449.

religious thought. However, Arnold broke with the tradition of evangelical pietism in his insistence on the need for theological reflection to be in tune with the findings of the discipline of critical biblical scholarship. Theological reconstruction would be forged in a dialectic of enlightened biblical exegesis and modern experience. In spite of Arnold's sensitivity to the historical dimension, this approach tended to give little more than a nod of recognition to the intervening doctrinal developments in the Christian tradition.

Arnold's views on the nature of scripture had a major influence on nineteenth-century English religious thought.[68] Together with Coleridge he challenged the widespread resistance to critical historical biblical scholarship that was prevalent in England during the first half of the nineteenth-century.[69] Arnold argued that the critical study and interpretation of Scripture was crucial to the revival of Christianity in the modern world. In his "Essay on the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures" he laid out his basic

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68. Williamson, "Arnold and the Bible", in The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.95-111.

69. Vernon Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, pp.190-193.

guidelines.[70]

Arnold argued that scripture had to be interpreted in a"double sense". On the one hand there is the original historical meaning of the passage. In the determination of this meaning critical biblical scholarship has an indispensible role to play. At this level of interpretation the Bible must be studied as any other ancient text. Biblical interpretation must responsive to and dependent upon critical historical analysis of scripture, and it must be constantly evolving and revising in the light of the development of critical biblical studies. Arnold agreed with the Oriel school that there is no real epistemological distinction between the study of scripture and other areas of human knowledge. Scripture must be studied with the same inductive critical tools necessary to the acquisition of any scientific knowledge.[71]

In arguing for a more critical hermeneutical approach to the interpretation of scripture Arnold recognized that the doctrine of plenary biblical

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[70]. Sermons, vol.2. (London: B.Fellowes, 1845), also Sermons Chiefly on the Interpretation of Scripture, (London: B.Fellowes, 1851)

[71]. See Brent's discussion of the approach to biblical interpretation developed by Whately, Hampden and Copleston, Liberal Anglican Politics, pp.155-164.

inspiration would have to be repudiated.[72] However, some revised theology of inspiration would be necessary since to restrict the interpretation of scripture to the results of academic scholarship would lead to a crude historicist "rationalism".[73]

The recognition of this historical nature of revelation lays the ground for the development of a more flexible and realistic concept of inspiration. It demands a more open and evolving exegetical method which attempts to cull out the more general truths that are partially realized within the limits and the errors of specific historical records:

> Inspiration does not raise a man above his own time, nor make him even in respect to that which he utters when inspired, perfect in goodness and wisdom; but it so overrules his language that it shall contain a meaning more than his own mind was conscious of, and thus gives to it a character of divinity, and a power of perpetual application.[74]

The illumination of errors and contradictions through the work of critical biblical scholarship does not "invalidate the truth of revelation, but merely the

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72. V.Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, pp.191.

73. Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.85.

74. quoted from V.Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, pp.192.

inspiration of the historical record of it".[75]

These reflections on scripture, inspiration, and critical scholarship developed perspectives put forward by Coleridge in his Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.[76] In turning to Coleridge Arnold begins to distance himself from the approach adopted by the Oriel liberals. Like Coleridge, Arnold argued that liberalism should not entail an uncritical submission to the exigencies of historical scholarship. Arnold develops this concern in his reply to Newman 73rd Tract, "On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Religion".[77] In constructing his reply Arnold employed Coleridge's famous distinction between reason and understanding.[78] Understanding grounds knowledge in human experience and the "evidence of sense".

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75. Sermons, II, pp.417; Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.78.

76. Tulloch argued that there was little direct dependence of Arnold on Coleridge in the development of his views on scripture and inspiration. He points out that Coleridge's Confessions were not published until 1840, shortly before Arnold's death (Movements of Religious Thought, pp.61) and well after Arnold's own views had been formulated. However, in a letter to Coleridge's nephew dated Jan.24, 1835 Arnold indicated that he had read the unpublished manuscript and was impressed by the new ground it was breaking. (Life, I, pp.347-8).

77. "Faith and Reason", Miscellaneous Works, pp.265-270.

78. ibid., pp.265-6.

Reason seeks out a higher order of truths not available to understanding. Reason is man's intellect in search of the numena. As such it is closely related to faith. "Faith may be described as reason leaning upon God...Faith without reason, is not properly faith".[79] Reason is the "necessary condition of the existence of faith".[80] Understanding has a "work to do in regard to revelation, and an important work".[81] However, it is limited. For a religious appropriation of the content of revelation a different type of intellectual activity is needed.

> The understanding has its proper work to do with respect to the Bible, because the bible consists of human writings and contains a human history. Critical and historical inquiries respecting it are, therefore, perfectly legitimate; its contains matter which is within the province of the understanding, and the understanding has god's warrant for doing that work which he appointed it to do; only let us remember that the understanding cannot ascend to things divine; that for these another faculty is necessary, - reason or faith.[82]

Surprisingly, a great deal of Arnold's discussion seems to echo Newman's concerns.[83] However, the critical

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79. ibid., pp.266.

80. ibid., pp.267.

81. ibid., pp.267.

82. ibid., pp.269.

83. see Williamson's comments, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, footnote, pp.85.

disagreement between their approaches is hinted at in Arnold's use of the phrase "Reason or Faith". Newman argues that the limits of human "understanding" must be transcended by "revealed doctrines", the supernatural "mysteries" of faith.[84] Newman wants to maintain a "dogmatic" edge to his definition of faith. Newman's critique of early nineteenth-century religious liberal hermeneutics is found in his review of Erskine's Internal Evidence. Erskine, similar to Arnold, argues that the Christian mysteries can be reduced and related to a common principle - the regeneration of moral virtue or character:

> The first faint outline of Christianity presents to us a view of God operating on the characters of men through a manifestation of His own character, in order that by leading them to participate in some measure of His moral likeness they may also in some measure participate of His happiness... The object of Christianity is to bring the character of man into harmony with that of God...The reasonableness of a religion seems to me to consist in there being a direct and natural connexion between a believing the doctrines which it inculcates, and a being formed by these to the character which it recommends.[85]

Newman accepts the fact that "there is a certain

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84. J.H.Newman, "On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion", Essays Critical and Historical, vol.1.

85. Quoted from J.H.Newman, "On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion", pp.50.

general bearing of faith in doctrine upon character".[86] However, he is not happy with Erkine's approach. Newman attempts to provide us with an appreciation of his difficulty by highlighting a distinction between "Mystery" and "Manifestation". Revealed doctrines considered as Manifestations imply the existence of a more foundational interpretive scheme which must be grappled with. In this approach the central challenge for the believer is to arrive at an intellectual grasp of a interpretive framework which will make sense of the various doctrinal "manifestations". The act of faith becomes an exercise in creative hermeneutics.

On the other hand, revealed doctrine "considered as a Mystery" refers to a spiritual truth that is "independent and real, of depth unfathomable, and illimitable in its extent". This reality is revealed in and through human language:

> Considered as a Mystery, it is a doctrine enunciated by inspiration, in human language, as the only possible medium of it, and suitable, according to the capacity of language; a doctrine lying hid in language, to be received in that language from the first by every mind, whatever be its separate power of understanding it..."[87]

Revealed mysteries in their linguistic form have a kind of discrete idiosyncratic quality about them. They

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86. ibid., pp.55-6.

87. ibid., pp.41.

cannot be mastered or systematically unpacked by an appeal to some underlying conceptual scheme. They consistently resist such attempts at rationalization.

> Revelation, in this way of considering it, is not a revealed system, but consists of a number of detached and incomplete truths belonging to a vast system unrevealed, of doctrines and injunctions mysteriously connected together; that is, connection by unknown media, and bearing upon unknown portions of the system.[88]

Newman argues that our fundamental approach to these mysteries should not be one of "rash theorizing and systemizing". Rather we should be zealous to guard and preserve the mysteries and "religiously adhere to the form of words and the ordinances under which it comes to us."[89] Each of the mysteries are clues or signals of a transcendent reality.

> In these remarks on the meaning of the word Mystery...it may be right briefly to enumerate the revealed doctrines in order, according to the Catholic, that is, the anti-rationalistic, notion of them. They are these: the Holy Trinity; the Incarnation of the Eternal Son; His atonement and merits; the Church as His medium and instrument through which He is converting and teaching mankind; the Sacraments, and Sacramentals ... as the definite channels through which His merits are applied to individuals; Regeneration, the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the body, consequent upon the administration of them; and lastly, our faith and works, as a condition of the availableness and efficacy of these divine appointments. Each of these doctrines is a Mystery; that is, each stands in a certain degree

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88. ibid., pp.42.

89. ibid., pp.47.

> isolated from the rest, unsystematic, connected with the rest by unknown intermediate truths, and bearing upon subjects unknown. Thus the Atonement: - why it was necessary, how it operates, is a Mystery; that is, the heavenly truth which is revealed, extends on each side of it into an unknown world. We see but the skirts of God's glory in it.[90]

As such, revealed mysteries necessarily entail intellectual "difficulties and perplexities". They are not simply manifestations of a system "such as we could trace into one whole, complete and definite."[91] Since religious doctrines are transcendent truths referring to realities that extend far beyond the immanent world of human religious experience. Doctrines considered as "mysteries" transcend human understanding and human reason and must, therefore, be grasped by faith.[92]

Arnold, on the other hand, follows the lead of Erskine and Coleridge. He embraces a more Coleridgean definition of Faith as the noetic orientation of the human mind to the transcendent dimensions of human experience.[93] Faith, interpreted as religious reason, provides a richer interpretation of the findings of

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90. ibid., pp.45.

91. ibid., pp.40.

92. ibid., pp.63-4; 68-70.

93. See Richard Brent's brief discussion of the approach taken by the Trinity Liberals to the question of faith, Liberal Anglican Politics, pp.163-165,

understanding:

> Wisdom is gained, not by renouncing or despising the understanding, but by adding to its perfect work the perfect work of reason, and of reason's perfection, faith.[94]

The perfecting work of this Coleridgean "reason" has four interrelated dimensions. First, it draws out the moral core of biblical teaching for personal and communal life.[95] Arnold points out that biblical discourse is set in the paranetic mode (exhorting, advising, edifying) rather than the doctrinal mode (presentation of propositional truths). For Arnold scripture does not "deliver theorems", rather it provides "motives and principles of life" which are capable of having "a moral bearing upon the heart and character".[96] Christian doctrine must also have this paranetic character.[97] In culling out this moral element "reason" illuminates the core of doctrine.

Secondly, Arnold argued that the capacity for culling out the progressively realized moral truths of scripture depends upon the intellectual and moral formation of the exegete. The exegete's life must be

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94. "Faith and Reason", Miscellaneous Works, pp.270.

95. Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.91.

96. ibid., pp.457.

97. ibid., pp.449-50.

shaped by the great moral truths of the Christian tradition. Giving the nod to pietistic concerns Arnold argued that one could not effectively translate the truths of scripture to modern culture without "an experimental knowledge of [their] power and living truth".[98]

Third, Arnold argued that there must be more than a narrow biblicist approach to truth. There is a creative dialectic between faith and culture. The enlightened conscience depends upon a broad liberal formation. In particular there was a need for a broad humanistic learning so that the mind would be "fresh and comprehensive" in its approach to scripture.[99]

Fourth, reason interprets doctrine as specific instances of the progressive historical realization of a moral or spiritual truth. A Coleridgean theory of progress was critical to Arnold's approach to religion and culture.[100] The Liberal Anglicans followed Coleridge in defining progress as a form of

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98. quoted from Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.93; Sermons, II, pp. 379.

99. Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.90-1; Sermons Chiefly on the Interpretation of Scripture, pp.86.

100. Duncan Forbes, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952); Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.90.

intellectual, moral, and spiritual integration and maturation - "the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity".[101] Elements of this maturation would include "comprehensiveness" and "large-mindedness".[102] For Arnold, religion was a critical element in the progress of culture and culture a critical element in the progress of religion. Cultural maturity and comprehensiveness must express itself in religion.[103] Practically, this could be accomplished with the establishment of a "truly national and Christian system of education".[104] The concern for "national education" is a distinctive aspect of nineteenth-century religious

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101. Coleridge, On the Constitution of Church and State, quoted by Raymond Williams in Culture and Society: 1780-1950, (New York: Penguin Books, 1961) pp.121. In this study Williams explores the formulation of the concept of "culture" 19th century English thought. Duncan Forbes discusses Arnold's concept of progress in The Liberal Anglican Idea of History, ch.3.

102. Duncan Forbes, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History, p.102-3.

103. ibid., p.101.

104. Life, II, pp.14; see Williamson's discussion, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.198-205 and Sir Joshua Fitch, Thomas and Matthew Arnold and Their Influence on English Education, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899).

thought.[105] Arnold, like Newman, was very skeptical of the thrust of secularist strategies for national education such as that proposed by Brougham. For Arnold religious values, and in particular Christian values, are essential to the authentic integral development of the moral and political culture of a nation.

This expanded definition of religious doctrine and its relation to the moral ethos of the society as well as the emphasis on the role of the laity entailed a re-definition of the nature of the magisterial ministry which is responsible for the nurturing of a religiously informed civic culture. Arnold insisted on the need for a class of religiously enlightened humanists as the practical social basis for the development of the Christian ethos and the ongoing transformation of culture. Following Coleridge he argued that the formation of an authentic civic culture was dependent on the development of the "clerisy". The clerisy were the educators (ministers, academics, statesmen, etc.) who manned the political, ecclesial, and educational institutions of the nation. This class worked within the confines of the ecclesial political institutions of the nation. The economic base of the clerisy was

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[105]. See Richard Brent's substantial discussion of this concern in chapters five and six of Liberal Anglican Politics.

dependent on the state and the established church while the aristocracy was dependent on land and the commercial class on the market system. Like Coleridge Arnold argued for the setting aside of reserves of Church property to free a broader based clerical class for their work of nurturing a broad Christian humanist ethos for political culture.[106] Arnold argued that this class should be formed in and responsible for the promotion of an ethos of religious liberal humanism. The consensus of liberal educated opinion would constitute the evolving magisterial function of the Church.

4 . Redefining the Church: Social Ethics and Ecclesiology

Finally, Arnold complained that traditional ecclesiology stood as an idolatrous autonomous discipline broken from its essential connection to social and political ethics. The early nineteenth

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106. see Gloyn's fine discussion of Arnold's Coleridgean program of moral reform in The Church in the Social Order, ch.4,pp.90ff. Similar to Coleridge Arnold argued for the existence of an endowed established church on the basis that it mitigated the absolutization of private property in the free market economy. (C.K.Gloyn, The Church in the Social Order, pp.91).

century was the age of the emergence of the "social question". The classical Aristotelian agenda for ethics targeted the realm of the personal and the political. Now a whole new area, the realm of the societal, was recognized and subjected to moral analysis and critique. Ethics was called on to subject traditionally accepted patterns of inequality in relations between social classes, men and women, proprietor and hired labour, to a moral analysis and critique. The emergence of a concept of "social justice" in the early nineteenth century entailed a vast extension of the discipline of ethics. The discipline of Christian social ethics arrived on the intellectual scene. For Arnold the nature and mission of the church must be fundamentally redefined in the light of this new development. A pivotal feature of the mission of the ecclesial community is now defined in terms of its social and political responsibilities. Arnold re-situated ecclesiology as a sub-topic within the broader discipline of Christian social and political ethics.

In part this new emphasis reflects a pietist concern for the penetration of the Church into modern culture. Arnold concurred with the ethos of pietism that the true focus of ecclesial life is the formation of a society which nurtures and promotes moral

transformation of common life and the cultivation of true personal piety.

> we see the two great principles of the Christian Church: first, cooperation for general moral improvement, for doing the duties of life better; and secondly, the bring Christ as it were into their communion, by beginning the day with him, and deriving their principle of virtuous living directly from his sacrament.[107]

Christianity as "religion" should nurture personal holiness of life and as "church" work for the moral transformation of society. The "practical" dimension of ecclesial life had a "twofold movement".

> By the Christian religion, I mean that knowledge of God and of Christ, and that communion of the Holy Spirit, by which an individual is lead through life, in all holiness, and dies with the confident hope of rising again through Christ on the last day...But, by the Christian Church, I mean that provision for the communicating, maintaining, and enforcing of this knowledge by which it was to be made influential, not on individuals but on masses of men. This provision consisted in the formation of a society, which by its constitution should be capable of action both within itself and without; having, so to speak, a twofold movement, the one for its outward advance, the other for its inward life and purification; so that Christianity should be at once spread widely, and preserved the while in its proper truth and vigour, till Christian knowledge should be not only communicated to the whole world, but be embraced also in its original purity, and bring forth its practical fruit.

Arnold echoed Wesley and Wilberforce in his insistence on the need for Christianity to penetrate all dimensions of human existence. In Wesleyan fashion he defined the

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107. "The Church", Miscellaneous Works, p.13.

Christian Church as "a sovereign discipline for every part and act of life".[108] However, he departed from Wesley when he insisted that the church must be redefined primarily in relation to the concern for "social" rather than "spiritual" transformation. For Arnold ecclesiology must be focussed on the development of an ethos and community capable of meeting the major social political questions of the modern era.

This new stress on Christian social doctrine directly affected two major areas of concern. It challenged laissez-faire liberalism and fundamentally redefined the nature and mission of the Church. On the political level Arnold rejected the free market ideology of Westminster liberals and shared Coleridge's call for more active intervention of the state into the economy.

Arnold's liberalism stood in sharp contrast to that of the Utilitarians or Westminster liberals led by Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and George Grote.[109] Arnold argued that their approach is flawed on two counts. First, Benthamism overrates political economy. Its view of the summum bonum of the state is far too narrow. An exclusive pursuit of "the economic good" leads to the

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108. ibid., pp.15.

109. E.Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.113-114, 159ff.

neglect of other critical aspects of the human good. Questions such as free trade or the advantages of large scale capital industries though "perfectly simple in an economical point of view" are "very complex" when "considered politically". The attempt to resolve such questions solely in reference to economic considerations leads to "direct social evil".[110]

Secondly, Arnold argues that the pursuit of the human good is never achieved if there is not an attunement of the political order to religious considerations.[111] The "social question" can only be resolved if the segregation of Church and state is overcome. An effective social ethic cannot bracket out those ultimate questions which are raised and addressed within the religious dimension of human life.

One of the social issues which Arnold gave considerable attention to was the plight of the working classes. Taking issue with the opinion of mainstream political economy Arnold saw poverty as a major "moral evil" as well as a brute social evil.[112] In line with the civic humanist tradition he argued that there was an essential relation between true civic freedom and

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110. Arnold, Life, vol.2, pp.170.

111. ibid., vol.2, pp.170.

112. "Christian Politics", Miscellaneous Works, pp.443.

property. He argued that the existence of a large unpropertied labouring class undermined liberal order",

> Freedom and property are things so essentially unity, that to have a large free population wholly dependent on their labour...is of itself a state of things fraught with mischief.[113]

Arnold contends that society has a responsibility to "put the poor man, being a freeman, into a situation where he may live as a freeman ought to live".[114] Since the causes of poverty are so complex Arnold argues that this goal cannot be achieved without the development of a "comprehensive" strategy of social, political, economic, educational, and ecclesial reforms.[115] A key element in his strategy is the creation of the conditions for the exercise of effective social and political responsibility among the labouring poor. Arnold states that,

> it is most important to put the poor in authority, to intrust them with the care of property, and with the making and enforcing of regulations for its protection and improvement. The true and only way to make civil society really deserving of its name, is to give its members an active and not merely a passive part in the management of its concerns.[116]

As pointed out in the previous chapter Coleridge laid

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113. Arnold, "The Social Conditions of the Operative Classes", Miscellaneous Works, pp.421.

114. ibid., pp.422.

115. ibid., pp.415.

116. ibid., pp.434.

great stress on the importance of education in the development of an enlightened citizenry. While he acknowledged the classical civic humanist emphasis on "proprietorship" as an important material context for the moral formation responsible autonomous citizens, nevertheless he did not offer any suggestions on how to deal with the dilemma of a large unpropertied proletariate class. Arnold addressed this question directly and argued that innovative strategies must be devised for giving the working classes positions of institutional responsibility within society. This concern was picked up by F.D.Maurice and the Christian Socialists who looked to the Workers Cooperative movement as one important vehicle to facilitate this goal.

Gloyn points out that Arnold's sensitivity to the social and moral questions facing industrial society is in stark contrast to other religious liberals such as Whately or Hampden.[117] His strategy for social reform entailed a more dynamic approach to the role of the liberal state vis a vis economy and society. The Latitudinarian trajectory was sympathetic with the laissez-faire ideology of mainstream liberal political

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117. Cyril K.Gloyn, The Church in the Social Order: A Study of Anglican Social Theory from Coleridge to Maurice, (Oregon: Pacific University, 1942), pp.87.

economy.[118] Arnold called for a fundamental redirection of liberal attitudes to the moral responsibility of the state in the social and economic sphere.

Ecclesiologically, Arnold's liberalism was also moving in a new and innovative direction. He was arguing for the development of a Christian social doctrine and redefining the essential mission of the church in the light of the imperatives of a Christian social ethic.[119] Arnold argued that the "social ineffectiveness" of the Church was a dramatic sign of a perversion of its true character.[120] The church must be defined and evaluated in the light of its social mission.

In "The Ends of the Church" Arnold argued that this deflection of the Church from its social mission was due to two factors. First, a flawed de-moralized concept of doctrine focussed attention on abstract metaphysical opinions that had little or no moral bearing. Secondly, with the emergence of the priesthood the church

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118. A.M.C.Waterman, "The Ideological Alliance of Political Economy and Christian Theology, 1798-1833", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 34(1983) pp.231-244

119. Arnold, "The Social Condition of the Operative Classes" Miscellaneous Works, pp.404-434; and "Christian Politics", pp.435-496.

120. C.K.Gloyn, The Church in the Social Order, pp.95.

"abandoned its social character and became an order rather than a society".[121] In this paradigm the church is perceived as a clerical institutional "order" geared to sacred rites and doctrines rather than a "society" geared to the moral and intellectual improvement of human existence.[122] This model of church "demoralizes" ecclesial life and makes of it an "idolatrous" order rather than an active society :

> the Church itself was reduced more and more to a passive condition - the priest alone was active. Thus there were some whose business was religion, and others whose business it was not. Religion and life were separated.[123]

The particular charism of the ecclesial society is its role in the moral transformation of social relations. Ecclesial life is geared to "cooperation for general moral improvement".[124] Such an approach underlines the close relation between political action and authentic ecclesial action. The most effective vehicle for the Christian public presence in the world is enlightened political action, not a reified ecclesiastical institution. It is the engaged Christian citizen, not the ecclesiastic, who truly manifests the church in the

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121. Miscellaneous Works, pp.449.

122. ibid., pp.448-49, 492-493.

123. ibid., pp.19.

124. ibid., pp.13.

world. Genuine ecclesial action is effective Christian social and political action. A fundamental pivot of Arnold's ecclesiology was this more dynamic view of the role of the political community as the place for enlightened Christian action.

Arnold's brand of liberal social idealism stood at the point of origin of a tradition of thought that profoundly redirected modern Anglican reflection on the role of the Church.[125] He defined the Church as "a Society for the putting down of moral evil".[126] The fundamental character of the mission of church was the "moral improvement of mankind" and the elimination of social injustice.[127] Reflection on the Church would increasingly be determined by concerns generated within the new discipline of "social ethics" rather than

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125. E.Williamson, The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, pp.205-222; T.W.Bamford, Thomas Arnold (London: Cresset Press, 1960), pp.194-5. By the latter part of the nineteenth century the question of the social mission of the church had become a major preoccupation in Anglican religious thought. Discussions of this development can be found in The Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) by Peter Jones; Maurice To Temple, (London: Faber and Faber, 1942) by Maurice Reckitt; Christian Socialism, 1848-1854, (London, 1929) by C.E.Raven, Origin and History of Christian Socialism, (Aarkus: Universitetforlaget, 1962), by Torben Christensen.

126. "The Ends of the Church", Miscellaneous Works, 444.

127. ibid., pp.443-447.

classical ecclesiology or jurisprudence.

In his controversial study Church and Society in England 1770-1970, E.R.Norman complains that this shift from theology to social ethics was an accommodation to the intellectual trends among the academia.[128] There may be some truth in Norman's cynical account of the "intelligentsia" class moralism underlying the so-called "radical social idealism" of many nineteenth and twentieth century Church leaders and theologians. However, the carping tone of Norman's discussion should not obscure an important feature of modern ecclesial history that is illuminated by his study. Nineteenth-century Christian thinkers such as Coleridge and Arnold played an important role in the cultivation of a new brand of liberalism that broke cleanly with the free market liberalism of the nineteenth-century English political economy. It was a brand of liberalism that underlined the fact that all economic systems should be subject to a searching moral critique. It contended that social and economic evils should be corrected by active state intervention. Finally, it evaluated the mission of the Church in the light of its ability to

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128. E.R.Norman, Church and Society in England 1770-1970, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976). See the discussion in his Introduction; also Norman's more recent study, Victorian Christian Socialists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

contribute to the alleviation of social and economic oppression. Ecclesiology is placed under the broader theological umbrella of new theological discipline - Christian social ethics. These developments may, as Norman suggests, be wrongheaded. However, they do represent the emergence of a new brand of social-welfare liberalism as well as a new approach to the understanding of the nature of the Church and its mission in the modern world.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION: THE TRADITION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF THE CHURCH

1. The Ecclesiological Principles of the Tradition of English Religious Liberalism

After the 1850s there was a renewed optimism in liberal circles. The second generation liberal Anglicans were confident that their position of dominance in theological debates had been restored. Part of that confidence was due to the fact that the tradition of liberalism had successfully completed a major internal critique and revision. Liberal Anglicanism made a series of important "corrections" to the earlier Latitudinarian trajectory based upon its dialogue with the civic humanist tradition of Enlightenment social theory as well as its engagement and response to the new questions generated by the pietist and Romantic movements in English culture. The corrections represented a successful development of the tradition insofar as they responded to inadequacies within the Latitudinarian trajectory and in doing so strengthened the arguments for a set of ecclesiological conclusions characteristic of the liberal tradition as a whole.

The pattern of continuity and change in the religious liberal approach to the nature of the church may be summarized in this way. First, despite the various shifts in the tradition, religious liberalism always contended that the church must be understood as a pattern of life which was fit firmly within the wider context of the natural or given character of social life, not transcendent to it. Latitudinarians argued that the church could not be defined as a sacred society separate from or counter to the pattern of institutional life which shaped civil society. They defined the church as a natural institutional order of religious life that was either part of the state (Stillingfleet and Hoadly), allied to the state (Warburton), or a voluntary association operating independently of the state (Locke).

Liberal Anglicans saw this as a far too narrow definition of the nature of ecclesial life. In their perspective the church was more than just a juridical institutional order which administered a specific sector of interests within civil society. They defined church in relationship to "culture" rather than the institutional associations of civil society. Culture is that evolving lifestyle which effects the integrated development of the political, social, economic, and

moral dimensions of any society. Linking the question of church to the concept of culture allowed for an enriched appreciation of the historical role of the ecclesial dimension in the formation and transformation of communal life. Nevertheless, in spite of this important correction Liberal Anglicans continued to press for a position central to Latitudinarian thought, namely that the church was not to be defined in terms of its distinctiveness and separation from the world but rather as an integral dimension of our common social life.

A common position of liberal ecclesiologists from Stillingfleet to Coleridge was that their theory of church was an expression of a more general theory of the nature of religious institutions and religious society in human experience. The fundamental norms which guide ecclesiological reflection are not distinctively Christian but grounded in this more comprehensive analysis of the communal expression of human religiosity. This would seem to entail a bracketing out of distinctly Christian theological concerns in the construction of an ecclesiology. What place could Christology, eschatology, or pneumatology play in such a discourse? In the case of Latitudinarian liberalism we do see an attempt to shrug off the traditional

theological baggage of ecclesiology. However, liberal Anglicans embraced a theology of immanence which allowed for a fuller re-appropriation of the major theological motifs of the Christian tradition without sacrificing the emphasis on the generically human character of ecclesiological theory.

Second, as Newman contended, there was an "anti-dogmatic principle" in religious liberalism. The concept of a distinct set of revealed authoritative doctrinal truths (dogmas) undermined the promotion of liberal values such as tolerance, pluralism, and comprehensiveness in the church and in the state. Latitudinarianism argued for the privatization of such positions. Dogmatic propositions were seen as purely subjective commitments and preferences whose influence on public discourse should be carefully controlled and checked.

In contrast, nineteenth-century Liberal Anglicans argued that religious truths do have an important role to play in shaping an enlightened public discourse. However, these truths are defined as tentative and open to revision rather than static and immutable. In that sense there is no revealed deposit of dogmatic truths but an ongoing process of revelation. Nineteenth-century liberals complemented their theology of

immanence with a new hermeneutic. They argued for a reinterpretation and reappropriation of Christian doctrines and symbols. The significance and meaning of religious revelation is a function of its capacity to express and illuminate universal dimensions of human experience through imagination, symbol and myth. By re-interpreting Christian doctrines in the light of the universal dimensions of human experience they were able to accommodate the pietist call for a restoration of a theological discourse in their ecclesiologies while still rejecting traditional approaches based on an appeal to an authoritative body of revealed doctrines. Revelation does not transcend human experience by illuminating a "supernatural fact" (Arnold). Such supernaturalistic interpretations of doctrine fail because of their essential irrelevancy to human experience. For the Liberal Anglicans it was the dimension of "moral life", both personal and social, which was perceived to be the primary interpretive context for culling out the existential meaning of doctrine.[1]

Third, religious liberals were deeply concerned

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[1]. Such an approach is open to the exploration of other avenues of interpretation: e.g. the reading of Christian doctrine in the light of the existentials of human existence (Bultmann) or psychological universals (Jungian theory).

about the need for a harmonious relationship between the church and the liberal state. The church must help create the conditions for a stable liberal social and political order. The narrow view of the liberal state as a tool for the institutional administration of conflicting interests that was put forward within the jurisprudence tradition entailed either an Erastian strategy of management of the church or a Lockean strategy of the strict separation of church and state.

In Liberal Anglicanism the jurisprudence model of the state was replaced by the more dynamic moral theory of the political realm generated by the civic humanist tradition. A new perspective on the role of the church in the public realm arose in conjunction with this new awareness of the state as a forum for moral discourse and a sovereign power for the moral reform in society. There was a redefinition of the nature of the Church in the light of its positive role as an agent of enlightenment and liberalization within society, rather than just a sector that needs to be managed in the light of the conditions necessary for a stable liberal order. The understanding of the mission of the Church was expanded to include questions of social, political, economic, and cultural development. This redefinition is summarized in H.R.Niebuhr's discussion of the

emergence of the paradigm "Christ the Transformer of Culture".[2] Niebuhr turns to the contributions of a major theological disciple of Coleridge, F.D.Maurice, to highlight this new sense of the role of Church as a creative liberalizing force in human culture. For Maurice, as for Coleridge and Arnold, the primary way the church exercises this transformative role is through its magisterial or educative function - its capacity to nurture the moral ethos and virtues necessary for the ongoing development, enlargement, and enrichment, of a culture which sustains and nurtures liberal political discourse, action, and order.

Fourth, the internal life of the church must reflect and embody the political principles of liberalism. In the jurisprudence tradition this was worked out on the basis of a redefinition of the nature of the major institutions of ecclesiastical authority such as the episcopacy. The theological concept of the episcopacy as a divine apostolic office was jettisoned. The episcopal office would be re-defined by the criteria of the natural jurisprudence tradition. Its justification lay in the fact that it represented the most prudential institutional arrangement for the

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[2]. H.R.Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

governance and management of the church in the light of the ends of the liberal state (e.g. social peace, tranquility, prosperity, and the promotion of individual self-interests).

In nineteenth-century Liberal Anglicanism we see the development of a more "republican" view of the internal life of the church stressing the magisterial function of the role of the educated laity and the need for more participative and democratic style of ecclesial life. The goal was not simply a juridical restructuring of ecclesial institutions but an internal transformation of ecclesial life so that it would embody a more intensely republican style of ecclesiastical activity.

Fifth, the theology of the church is subsumed under the wider discipline of social and political theory. For the Latitudinarian tradition the church was seen as a prudential juridical arrangement. The structures of the church are determined by the criteria of natural jurisprudence rather than reference to doctrinal standards derived from scripture or tradition. The decisive norms for ecclesiological direction revolved around considerations of the conditions necessary for the existence of a tranquil stable political order which would allow for the maximization of individual interests and freedoms.

Nineteenth-century liberalism argued that this definition was too narrow. It presented a more teleological view of the character of the church as well as the state. Liberal Anglicans embraced an "Aristotelian" civic humanist approach to political theory. In this approach social order is geared to the promotion of the full human good rather than the mere administration of conflicting preferences and interests. This ethos would be determinative for both the disciplines of political economy and ecclesiology. However, for both Latitudinarians and Liberal Anglicans there was a conviction that ecclesiology must be subsumed under and directed by an evolving, progressively enlightened exercise of human prudence which determined the common good for society as a whole. Ecclesiology cannot claim a status radically unique and set apart from the moral, historical, social, and political disciplines which deal with the problem of "man in society". Thus while ecclesiology deals with a specific sphere of communal life, nevertheless, it is subject to the evolving standards, criteria, methods, and paradigms that characterize the moral, historical, social, and political sciences as a whole. Liberalism wanted an extraordinarily close dialogue between ecclesiology and enlightenment social theory. Both

Latitudinarians and Liberal Anglicans relocated ecclesiology under the umbrella of a broader social and political theory such as jurisprudence or civic humanism.

Sixth, the dependence of ecclesiology on the disciplines dedicated to the study of human community means that ecclesiology is in a constant state of evolution and updating. A successful ecclesiology will be the one which provides the most creative exploration of the ecclesial sphere in the light of the insights and methods of the leading paradigm in social and political theory. In effect, religious liberalism attempted to ensure success in developing an ecclesiology that recognized and responded to the critical concerns of Enlightenment social theory by tacitly accepting the fact that ecclesiology be developed out of the paradigm which represents the most intellectually persuasive social theoretical perspective of the day. However, and liberals are the first to admit this, the scholarly consensus shifts and paradigms change. Thus there is a constant requirement to update, reform, and reconstruct ecclesiology in the light of the leading developments in the human sciences.

Finally, religious liberalism insists that this ever-reforming tradition of ecclesiology must be guided

by principles of tolerance, pluralism, ecumenism, and comprehension. These procedural principles articulate the fundamental norm of "charity" or "love" in the realm of ecclesiological debate.[3] Faithfulness to these norms ensures that the process of development will not be deflected into a restrictive trajectory of a fundamentalism to the right or to the left. In order to hit the ecclesiological "mean", theoretical approaches to ecclesial life must be increasingly widened, enriched, and enlarged. Ecclesiology must demonstrate an ecumenical capacity to handle the complex diversity of material bequeathed by a plurality of ecclesial traditions. This approach has given the tradition a very real openness and flexibility as it responds to the positions, concerns, and problems of religious traditions which may diverge significantly from the liberal tradition. In recent years the broad

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[3]. For a contemporary version of this theme see Langdon Gilkey, Catholicism Confronts Modernity, (New York: Seabury Press,1975): "Tolerance is the initial historical and social requirement for the possibility of an actual community of love; for no love can arise among self-determining persons without respect and forbearance...the possibility of a community of love depends on some sense of the relativity of each person in the community...It would seem, then, that the presupposition of historical relativism, so destructive of the traditional dogmas, the hierarchy, and the law of the church, and so threatening to the vocation of the priest, is a necessary condition for the realization of Christianity." (pp.73-74)

ecclesiological perspectives established by this ecumenical horizon were widened further with the advent of interreligious dialogue.[4]

However, there were limits to dialogue and limits to tolerance. The empathetic response to the partners of dialogue should not lead to any compromise in terms of commitment to the values of tolerance and comprehension. The dogmatic edge of many of these religious traditions must be subject to critique. Authentic ecclesiological development should always be characterized by increasing tolerance, comprehensiveness, and pluralism.

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[4]. Hans Küng has always stressed the importance of interreligious dialogue for ecclesiological reflection. His early work focussed on the question of church and salvation. Cf. Freedom Today, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), or "The World's Religions in God's Plan of Salvation" in Christian Revelation and World Religions, ed. J.Neuner, (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), pp.25-66. On Being a Christian (New York: Doubleday, 1976) and The Church (New York: Image Books, 1976) also provide treatments of this question. His discussion has been expanded with his recent studies in comparative theology, Christianity and World Religions: Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, (New York: Doubleday, 1986) and Christianity and Chinese Religions, (New York: Doubleday, 1988).

2. Liberalism as a "Tradition" and the Problem of Conservatism

The religious liberal approach to the question of the church constitutes a major "tradition" of ecclesiological reflection in the modern era - a tradition distinct from "scholastic" Lutheran, Reformed, or Roman Catholic theological traditions. By the middle of the nineteenth-century English religious liberals themselves were becoming conscious of this fact. The first significant statement of this thesis was a balanced and insightful study penned by A.P.Stanley, the disciple and biographer of Thomas Arnold. Stanley's essay, "Theology of the 19th Century", offered an interpretive grid which was to be developed and fleshed out but not substantially altered over the next century.[5]

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[5]. To a large extent the historiography of theological developments during the 19th century has been dominated by the agenda of religious liberalism. A number of studies can be classified within this broad interpretive framework: A.P.Stanley, "Theology of the Nineteenth Century", in Essays Chiefly on Questions of Church and State (London: John Murray, 1884); John Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Humanities Press, 1885, 1971 reprint); Otto Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant and its Progress in Great Britain since 1825 (London: Swan Sonnenchein, 1893); Vernon Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913); Bernard Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore (London: Longmans and Green, 1971).

Stanley defines religious liberalism as a commitment to the "principles of freedom, of justice, of toleration, of universal sympathy, of fearless truthfulness".[6] It is tolerant and comprehensive, avoiding any form of "party spirit".[7] It avoids the temptations of systematization, credalism, dogmatism in biblical and theological studies.[8] The critical liberal values such as tolerance, pluralism, progress, freedom, consensus, rights of the individual, and the value of the secular, are seen to be continuous with and, in fact, the products of the Christian tradition.

In the area of theology Stanley describes a number of principles which characterize the tradition of religious liberalism. Its biblical theology is marked by the application of historical critical method to interpretation of scripture and a re-opening of the questions of canon and biblical inspiration.[9] It accepts open dialogue with non-Christian religions and philosophies and looks forward to an ongoing development

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6. A.P.Stanley, "Theology of the Nineteenth Century", pp.375.

7. ibid, pp.370-371.

8. ibid, pp.353, 356, 363-368, 371.

9. ibid, pp.352-358.

of doctrine and theological insight .[10] It is critical of dogmatic concepts of religious truth and stresses the importance of an ongoing revision of theological concepts so that they will meaningfully reflect contemporary experience.[11] It points to the practical or moral dimension as the essential core of Christian life.[12]

Finally, religious liberalism began to evolve its own theory of tradition and development. For Stanley the history of religious liberalism is a chronicle of an irenic crusade - the story of the confident ongoing advance of critical religious reason, tolerance, and comprehensiveness in the face of the reified patterns of dogmatic orthodoxy. He argues that religious liberalism is something of a third force in Christianity cutting a path between secular rationalism and orthodox fundamentalism. It is expressed in the works of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Scotus Erigena, Luther, Erasmus, Grotius, and the English Latitudinarians.[13] Despite these ancient antecendents, Stanley argues that it is only in the nineteenth century that one begins to

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10. ibid, pp.358-36.

11. ibid, pp.363-369.

12. ibid, pp.361-363.

13. ibid, pp.370.

witness the full theological blossoming of this third force.[14] Stanley believed that this liberalizing movement was penetrating most national and denominational religious communities. It constituted a "new reformation", a "new age" for theology.[15]

John Tulloch, a close friend of Thomas Erskine, developed the line of interpretation put forward by Stanley. He produced a number of substantial historical studies tracing developments in English theology since the Tew school.[16] His work put forward a theory of religious liberalism as a tradition of theological discourse. Tulloch attempted to draw his readers' attention to the liberalizing movements within the history of religious thought ("enlarging, correcting, and modifying human opinion"). He saw this as a slow cumulative movement whereby religious knowledge and experience was progessively expanded and made more comprehensive and irenic:

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14. ibid, pp.350.

15. ibid, pp.350.

16. Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century (1885) and Rational Theology in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols. Tulloch produced a number of essay-length assessments. A helpful summary of this material is provided by A.C.Cheyne in his introduction to the 1971 reprint of Movements of Religious Thought, p.20-31.

> Rightly viewed, it is typified neither by tradition nor revolution. It is a continuous power in human life and history, moving onwards with the ever accumulating growths of human knowledge and of spiritual experience; ever new yet old; linking age to age, it is to be hoped, in happier and more benign intelligence.[17]

According to Tulloch religious liberalism is distinguished by its own particular style of development. Conservatism sees authentic development as linked to fidelity to a source tradition. Unlike conservatism liberalism rejects this stance of unwavering fidelity to one source tradition. Nor does liberalism envisage, as does radicalism, revolutionary reconstructions and transformation based upon total subversions of established positions. Such subversions would violate the principles of tolerance and consensus. Liberalism prides itself on its gradualism and its capacity for increasing "comprehensiveness" in accommodating different positions. Liberalism respects tradition but engages in ongoing expansion and enlargement of its horizons through dialogue with new religious and philosophical approaches. The contributions of any one "system" need to be situated and balanced. It portrays the development of tradition as an ever-expanding consensus which is constantly being

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17. Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century, pp.4.

enriched by new religious and philosophical perspectives.

As an intellectual tradition, religious liberalism tends to sees itself as the only viable theological response to the new ecclesiological issues raised in modernity. This entailed a particular kind of reading of the contribution of religious conservatism or confessionalism in the nineteenth century. For Stanley religious liberalism should demonstrate a breadth of spirit in its interpretation of non liberal traditions that would deflect any charge of unreflective special pleading or party polemics. Having defined the liberal agenda Stanley strives to give an appreciative account of the contributions and concerns of his conservative antagonists in nineteenth-century theology. For example, while arguing that the Tractarian movement was largely out of line with the spirit of the "new theology", nevertheless he does point to the significance of the contributions of Pusey's Theology of Germany and Keble's Christian Year to modern religious thought and spirituality.[18] The shrill polemical spirit characteristic of Arnold's reaction to the "Oxford

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18. A.P.Stanley, "Theology of the Nineteenth Century", pp.351-352.

Malignants" is repudiated.[19] Stanley felt secure that religious liberalism was the new theological mainstream, and, accordingly, he could adopt a more magnanimous attitude towards conservatism.

Yet, despite its achievements in providing sensitive sketches of patterns of development in nineteenth century religious thought, liberal historical theology did not shed a great deal of light on those ecclesiological perspectives which broke firmly with core liberal principles. It gave short shift to contributions which highlighted the dogmatic principle in ecclesiology. Attempts to underline the sacral significance of ecclesial offices and institutions, authority, public authoritative doctrine, creeds, ritual and sacraments, and the supernatural were treated with suspicion. Liberal historiography tended to see these as, at best, a meaningful attempt to preserve the colour and atmosphere of Catholic Christianity or, at worst, a series of "obstructionist" moves directed against the vital thrust of modern theology.[20] Such moves

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19. R.E.Prothero, The Life and Correspondence of Arthur P. Stanley, vol.1, (London: John Murray, 1893), p.308. The label, "Oxford malignants", was used by Arnold in a controversial essay on the tractarian movement.

20. H.Butterfield makes a similar complaint about the "whig" interpretation of political history, The Whig Interpretation of History, (London: G.Bell, 1931), p.35f.

were understood in largely derogatory terms: ecclesiasticism, authoritarianism, clericalism, sacerdotalism, ritualism, dogmatism, superstition, enthusiasm, and fundamentalism.

In effect the liberal interpretation of non-liberal traditions amounted to a theory of obstruction. Opposition to the normative values of liberalism was classified in terms of reaction or restoration.[21] The obstructionist thesis served as a foil for understanding the slow progress of liberal ideals in religious thought. Vernon Storr writes,

> Intellectual advance is always achieved through opposition. New views have to contend with the innate conservatism of the human mind, which is never more marked than where theological belief is concerned. The period now under review affords abundant illustration of this law of progress through opposition. Such advance as was made came about only after incessant conflict with the forces of reaction, ignorance, and traditionalism.[22]

This thesis proved to be an economical move since it allowed for a fairly rapid analysis of historical controversies. The voices of reaction are noted but

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21. Arnold condemned the conservative approach to tradition as inherently obstructionist: "My abhorrence of Conservatism is...because it checks the growth of mankind in wisdom, goodness, and happiness, by striving to maintain institutions, which are of necessity temporary, and thus never hindering change, but often depriving the change of half of its value." (Life, vol.1, pp.370)

22. V.F.Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, pp.4.

there is no need to give serious treatment to the theological issues raised by obstructionists which directly challenge some of the conclusions critical to the liberal tradition of thought.

Perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks of nineteenth-century liberal historiography was this obstructionist thesis. The thesis failed and still does fail to grasp the power and persistence of alternate conservative or neo-orthodox paradigms within modern religious culture. It tends to ignore or provide somewhat condescending sociological explanations for the endurance, the influence, and the major revivals of religious conservatism.

Furthermore, in terms of the analysis of modern ecclesiological debates, this tradition of interpretation has little or no appreciation for the theological contributions of conservative traditions particularly where those contributions move against liberal conclusions. The first casualty of this bias was the theological defense of the "dogmatic principle" in nineteenth-century confessionalist theology. Newman's equation of liberalism with the "anti-dogmatic principle" was not a superficial characterization. Religious liberals firmly believed that the sharp dogmatic edge of religious and theological traditions

must be diffused otherwise it will undermine the consensual approach to religious truth.[23] When it comes to the question of dogma Tulloch's history of modern theology firmly reasserts the anti-dogmatic stance of liberal theory:

> Unity can never come from dogma, as our forefathers unhappily imagined. Dogma splits rather than unites from its very nature.[24]

It is not surprising to find that the extensive contributions Newman made to the development of a theory of doctrine did not receive a sympathetic hearing from Stanley or Tulloch.[25] The best these authors can say about the Oxford movement is that it may have had a positive practical influence in the revival of Christian spirituality, worship, or art. Its contributions in the areas of religious aesthetics and piety were welcomed. However, its theological contributions were

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23. John Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought, pp.21.

24. ibid., pp.335.

25. There is no reference to Newman's seminal study, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, in Tulloch's review of nineteenth-century religious thought in England. Vernon Storr devotes a chapter to Newman's doctrine of development (The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, ch.16, pp.294-316. However, in this chapter Storr shifts from interpretation and description to critique. He attempts to show why "Newman's argument falls to the ground" (pp.311).

seen to be minimal.[26]

The possibility that an intellectual tradition marked by a strong fidelity to a doctrinal tradition of ecclesiology could make a successful intellectual response to Enlightenment debates was not a possibility that was entertained by nineteenth-century religious liberalism. Because of this line of interpretation liberal historical studies have tended to be short-sighted in their treatment of the important theological contributions of thinkers such as J.H.Newman to the ecclesiological debates of the nineteenth century.

3. J.H.Newman, Liberalism and the Question of Tradition

In the Apologia Newman attempted to document the slow evolution of his personal intellectual life. He presented this intellectual biography in order to rebut Charles Kingsley's attempt to discredit his contribution. Nevertheless, Kingsley's attack has left

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26. Vernon Storr states that "Tractarianism has left a permanent mark upon the English Church; though its power has been felt less in the sphere of thought than in that of practical Church life. Indeed, its theological, as opposed to its ecclesiastical, significance has been greatly over-estimated, and the historian of today, looking back upon the movement, is unable to place it in the main line of theological advance." (The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, p.3) Similar assessments are provided by Stanley, Tulloch, and Reardon.

its mark on the liberal interpretation of Newman. Kingsley presented Newman as reincarnation of Thomas Atterbury, a clever High Church controversialist and intellectual dilettante who would brilliantly employ whatever argument at hand to discredit his adversary. This type of interpretation is indicative of a tendency to want to simplify the boundaries of ecclesiological debate in nineteenth-century England in such a way so as to effectively rule out or discredit, rather than respond to, the kind of questions Newman was attempting to raise.

In a long-term conflict between major intellectual traditions strategies such as the obstructionist thesis, or the conservative thesis of "accommodation", only serve to prolong the debates rather than moving them towards a constructive resolution. They also tend to distort the nature of the debate by discrediting important questions and concerns that are being raised by a conflicting tradition of discourse.

It is crucial that the wider parameters of ecclesiological debate in the modern era be understood. The significance of the tradition of liberal ecclesiological reflection cannot be adequately assessed by a purely internal history of the tradition. Newman was one example of a nineteenth-century theologian who opened up

an important non-liberal line of argument in the post-Enlightenment debate over the nature of church, tradition, and doctrine. Previous conservative reactions from Atterbury to Irving were unsuccessful insofar as they failed to engage the Enlightenment debate in the construction of their ecclesiologies. By engaging that debate Newman's contribution underscored the fact that the contribution of religious liberalism can only be properly assessed within a framework of ecclesiological debate - a debate that transcends the boundaries of the tradition of religious liberalism.[27]

In his debate with the liberal tradition he argued that it was vulnerable to critique on two counts. In the first place, as noted in the introduction to this study, Newman's work proposed a third task in the interpretation of modern ecclesiological debates. This third task assumes that the discipline of ecclesiology is a tradition of rational enquiry that must be responsive to the critical concerns proposed by Enlightenment social theories. However, it also

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[27]. My discussion in this section focusses on one major conflict of traditions in ecclesiological discourse, 19th century liberalism and conservatism. In the latter part of the twentieth century we have witnessed the development of a new perspective on these debates with the emergence of a full-scale ecclesiological dialogue with radical social theory in political and liberation theology.

underlines the fact that ecclesiology is a discipline that is grounded in allegiance to and careful interpretation of a historical tradition that transcends the concerns and perspectives of the Enlightenment.

The interest in pursuing lines of ecclesiological discourse which were in significant dialogue with Enlightenment social and political thought and the task of identifying the key questions and concerns generated by the Enlightenment debate are concerns that fit comfortably within the intellectual confines of religious liberalism. However, this concern for a rigorous analysis of the continuity of modern ecclesiological traditions with normative or orthodox traditions of thought is rooted in a more conservative paradigm of ecclesiology.

In tackling this question Newman raised the issue of whether the tradition of religious liberalism as a whole was too historically parochial in its basic principles and conclusions. In effect, he challenged the integrity of religious liberalism as an "orthodox" Christian tradition. He did this by attempting to provide a much sharper definition of the complex issues that are involved in the analysis of "tradition" and the question of development within a tradition. In doing so he opened up a new field of questions and concerns.

What constitutes an historical tradition? Given the ineluctable fact of historical change, what are the patterns of development that are integral to the continuity, survival, and growth of a tradition? What standards are there for the determination of whether a significant historical change in practice or belief constitutes a major development of the tradition or a deflection from the tradition? The interesting feature of Newman's intense scrutiny of the fidelity of the liberal tradition of discourse was that he developed his argument by an innovative treatment of historicist focus of Enlightenment theory.

Newman's theory attempted to subject the question of "development" in tradition to a more rigorous historical analysis than that envisaged by the tradition of liberalism. The liberal stress on the "autonomy" of church and theology, its freedom for "constant revision", and the right and duty of each generation to test and modify credal statements in the light of its own experience, offered few criteria for assessing what constitutes a normative development within a tradition.[28] In fact, religious liberals such as Storr could not entertain the possibility that such orthodox

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[28]. See Vernon Storr's discussion of "theology and development" in chapter two of The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century.

traditions of development do exist. Newman argues that one can delineate distinct coherent traditions in history. These traditions are constituted by certain basic principles which define the basic identity of a tradition. Normative traditions can be identified and departures from a given tradition can be detected. Traditions may undergo development. However, there are tests for determining continuity in the midst of the development. Thus, there is a certain "rationality" in the development of a tradition and criteria can be established for the identification of normative historical traditions. The rational justification for this thesis entails a theory of history, tradition, and historical development similar to that proposed by Newman in his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, or, from a quite different perspective, that proposed more recently by Alasdair MacIntyre in Whose Justice? Which Rationality?.[29] Such a theory lies securely within the horizons of the Enlightenment. However, it does so in such a way as to undermine the uncritical repudiation of tradition characteristic of many trajectories of Enlightenment theory.

Secondly, Newman also challenged the religious

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29. Alasdair MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?, pp.353-4.

liberal sense of its theological monopoly over the new critical questions concerning the church. Newman's project raised the question whether liberalism had unduly narrowed the range of theological options available for a modern reconstruction of ecclesiology in the light of concerns of Enlightenment social theory. His work attempted to show that a long-standing doctrinal tradition of ecclesiology, with its dogmatic edge and traditional sense of the differentiation church and society, could still continue to press forward as a viable intellectual tradition which meaningfully engages and successfully responds to the new questions and concerns provoked by the Enlightenment debates. He held out the possibility of identifying ecclesiological traditions which may be capable of creative development in response to the critical concerns of the Enlightenment without being deflected into an anomalous stance in relation to a previous tradition of orthodoxy. This, for Newman, would be the treasure hidden in the field for modern ecclesiological development.

Newman suggests some tentative guidelines to identify the basic features of a successful conservative resolution of ecclesiological debates in modernity. In the first place, given the fact that the liberal tradition engaged the critical questions posited by

Enlightenment debates, therefore, the arguments underlying liberal conclusions must be given careful consideration. While Newman may disagree with the conclusions, nevertheless, he is prepared to engage the arguments. The so-called "modernist" bent of Newman's thought is a very real feature of his contribution.

Secondly, though the liberal arguments carry weight, Newman wants to raise a set of concerns that check the unilateral direction of the liberal argument towards the conclusions listed above. Newman argues that since ecclesiology is a "tradition" of enquiry, therefore, the traditional ecclesiological concerns will have to carry far more weight than is generally acknowledged by religious liberals. The intellectual horizon of the "old" will have to significantly determine, and not only be determined by, the horizon of the "new". This would lead to a greater stress on the Christian "distinction" in reaching a judgement on the ecclesiological debates raised by Enlightenment thought. This emphasis would also affect the definition of the project outlined in chapter one - a project which attempts to respond to the liberal insistence on the close working relationship between ecclesiology and Enlightenment social theory. While the strict "separation" of ecclesiology and social theory is

untenable, nevertheless, there can be a more forceful "distinction" between the two disciplines than is suggested by the tradition of religious liberalism.

Newman's project should not be ruled out in any a priori way. It represents an important conservative response which engages and develops the Enlightenment debate in ecclesiology. He dragged confessionalist theology into these debates to the dismay of liberals as well as conservatives. Liberals accused him of muddying the waters and engaging in a slanted apologetic for his confessionalist stance. Conservative Roman Catholic scholars, bothered by the unconventional and "modernist" character of Newman's intellectual defense of the Catholic Church, suspected that the gift of this famous Anglican convert might prove to be a Trojan horse. Perhaps this mixed reception accounts for the fact that the project he inaugurated still remains in large part an unattended and unfinished inquiry in contemporary ecclesiological debate.

The debate raised by these conflicting traditions of modern ecclesiological discourse cannot be evaded by simplistic theological solutions such as an appeal to some validating principle in Christology or eschatology. Nor are the debates advanced by endless platitudes about the pluralistic method of modern theology. Significant

advance will demand prolonged historical research and careful conceptual analysis.

The theological challenge posed by Enlightenment social theory entails risks. Liberals underline the fact that ecclesiological traditions can be defeated if they run up against critical questions which prove to be intractable in the light of the core principles of the tradition. Conservatives warn that the discipline of ecclesiology is a tradition-constituted form of enquiry. A given tradition can be "enlarged", "corrected", and "developed". However, they can also be deflected if they accommodate positions which negate fundamental features of that tradition.

Early nineteenth-century theologians appreciated the tentative character of modern ecclesiological debate. The theologian cannot be assured in advance that the tradition to which he gives his allegiance, and in which he is prepared to intellectually labour, will prove successful in meeting the ecclesiological challenges generated by the Enlightenment. The forward-looking and risk-taking biblical definition of faith enunciated in the Letter to the Hebrews received extensive commentary by conservative theologians such as

Newman and liberals such as Julius Hare.[30] Both insisted that the theologian must work out a theological response in "confident assurance concerning what we hope for and conviction about things that at present remain unseen" (Heb.11:1).

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30. Julius Hare, "Faith, A Practical Principle", in The Victory of Faith, (1840), (London: Griffith Farran Okeden & Welsh, n.d.), Hare's sermons were a response to Newman's Lectures on Justification; John Henry Newman, sermons 9 and 10, in Oxford University Sermons (1843) (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1900.

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